

# BACK TO SCHOOL

WORST OF THE VALLEY  
WINNERS (LOSERS)

SPECIAL TEEN SECTION

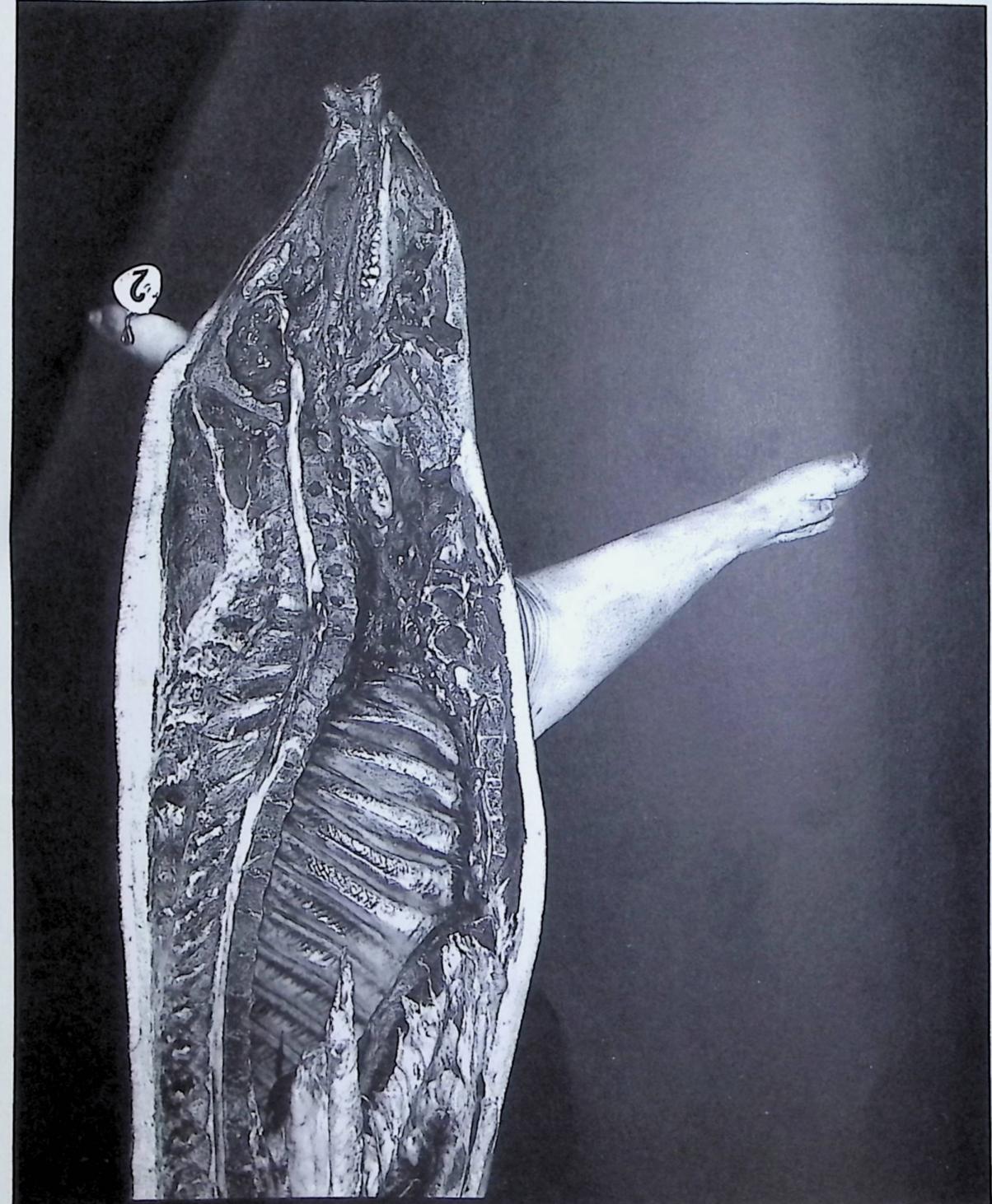
11 SEPT

IMAG

INTERVIEWS WITH  
JAMES KOCHAKA &  
BEN FOLDS

FREE

FICTION • MUSIC • COMICS



OP  
EDGE

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Anatomized Pig

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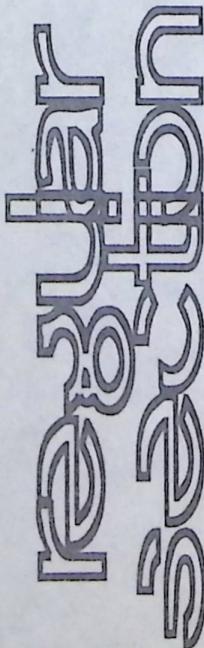
A black and white photograph of James Kochalka, the cover artist. He is a man with short, dark hair, wearing a light-colored button-down shirt. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is slightly out of focus.

cover by james kochalka superstar

SEPTEMBER

# CONTENTS

publisher/editor/design  
MURPHY  
sales manager  
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ANDREA CARLIN  
staff artist  
MATT SMITH  
distribution  
REIKKA SIMULA  
legal counsel  
DANIEL O. OFFNER  
bookkeeping  
KATIE LARKIN  
accounting  
LINDA SHEAR



- FEATURES  
16 interview with james kochalka / murphy  
24 the people have spoken / chet + bunny  
FICTION  
20 to serve coyote, part two / jim zalesky  
28 el amante / bob flaherty  
MUSIC  
30 mock music / phil straub  
31 reviews / meathook + carwreck + phil  
34 africa fete / meathook williams  
COLUMNS  
IFC on edge / robert tobey  
29 guilty pleasures / michael charles hill  
36 ask mr. smarty pants  
37 ask big bitch  
38 the nurse is in / jessica faller-berger  
GUIDES  
40 amherst / roscoe and lulu  
45 coffeehouses / shaky  
COMICS  
42 the stairs up to my apartment / james kochalka  
43 hey budd / bryant  
43 leold / roger + salem salloom  
44 king of the sun / renrut  
46 rock star cartoonist / karl stevens  
IBC kidaver / eric talbot  
ETC  
47 vmail

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ESSAYS

4 high school / anonymous

5 liar / mark franczyk

6 ppva / zara bode

FICTION/POETRY

8 pretty / maia bissette

10 slut / maia bissette

11 the phone book is stupid /

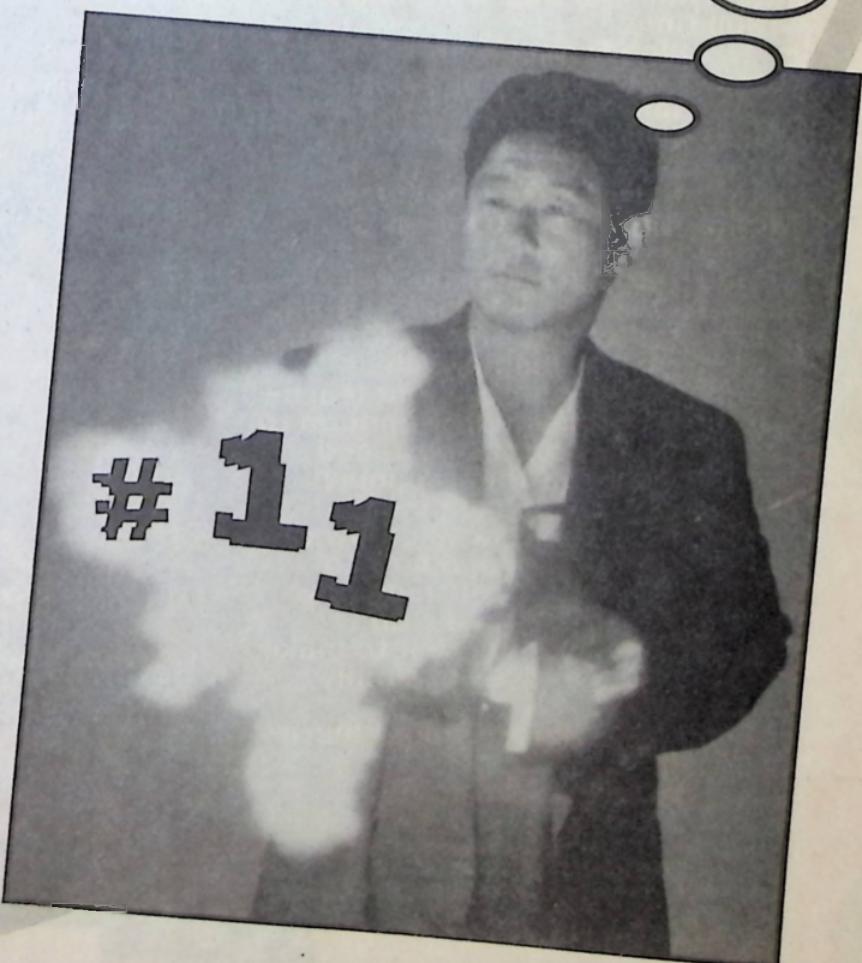
aaron tomkins



MUSIC

12 interview with ben folds / aundria theodes

SMELLS LIKE  
TEEN  
SEXUALITY



# HIGH SCHOOL

is about learning.  
It's not as simple as learning whatever it is that's being taught in your required classes, though.

It's about learning how to listen, how to speak, how to think. Learning who you are, who your friends are, the type of people you want as friends. Learning how to trust your innermost feelings, and how to find those feelings in the first place. It's about learning what's really important to you, and learning what you really don't care about.

High School is about learning how to tolerate, how to accept, how to like, and how to love. Learning how to give as well as receive, and how to trust that everything will even itself out on its own. It's about learning that your mom and dad actually do have the right answers sometimes, and that your kid brother isn't such a dumb little kid anymore.

High School is about learning how to treat people as people, not as stereotypes. Learning that sometimes a kiss isn't just a kiss, that sometimes it means more, and that sometimes it means less. Learning how to achieve, how to succeed, how to accomplish. It's about learning how to not come in first place and still be proud, and about coming in last and learning how to admit that you could've done better.

High School is about learning that loud parties don't necessarily mean a good time. Learning that loneliness doesn't go away in a crowd, and that sometimes it's okay to be by yourself on a Friday or Saturday night. It's about learning that your lunchtime crowd doesn't constitute your popularity, and that popularity is all a matter of perspective. It's about learning that boredom is simply laziness of the mind, and that watching three hours of Thursday night NBC is not quality relaxation time.

High School is about learning how to pack a bag, how to pack a car, and how to pack a room full of way too much stuff. Learning that people probably like you a whole lot more than they'll ever tell you, and that it's your responsibility to make sure your friends know how much you appreciate them. It's about learning that simply doing what you're supposed to do isn't enough, you need to put forth twice that much in order to fully grasp whatever it is that's sitting in front of you. It's about learning how to make people smile.

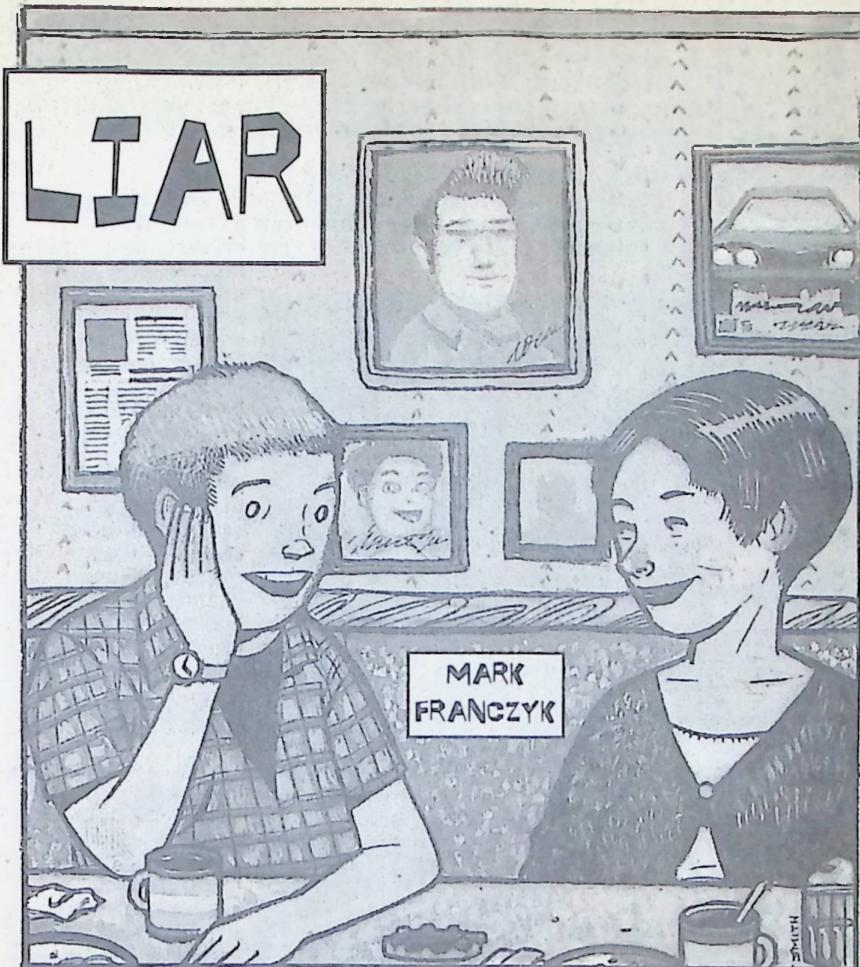
High School is about learning how to miss people enough to not stick them in the past, and how to not miss them so much that it keeps you from moving into the future. Learning how to motivate yourself and how to motivate others. Learning how what the phrase "make do" means, and how to use it to make it seem as if you're not simply "making do."

High School is about learning.

Learning how to live.

- anonymous email





qualms. It grows wearisome. What is the worst that could happen by the truth?

This is not my first time saying this, and I doubt it will be my last. I am gay. That, one of the shortest sentences I know, took fourteen years to say; to myself, alone, where no one else could possibly hear. In fear of what consequences such a truth may bring, I further compensated through lying. It took another two years to say it to somebody else. "I'm gay." My shield of evasiveness and lies fell to the ground; in anger, frustration, and fatigue. The truth was exposed.

With my true self exposed, I have been left to the mercy of those for whom I lied. The consequence; only inseparable friendships, and the feeling of being better shielded than ever before. Maybe I would have more to say if my reality was more like that of many others. I was not kicked out of my house, left friendless, or cast aside through the rejection of others. The reality is that some are left three for three. When the courage is found to break the pattern of their lies, it is met neither with words of admiration nor compassion.

So, what is the difference between being an in the closet to being out? Well, when you are in the closet, you are just like everyone else. You play the games of "who do they want me to be." You are afraid of rejection, no different from the rest of the world. However, when you no longer hide the truth from yourself and everyone else, you are freed of the games, freed of the anxiety, and finally ready to enjoy life at face value. Nothing left to hide behind, and no reason to try.

*(Mark Franczyk is a junior at the Williston Northampton School where he is a co-head of the Gay Straight Alliance.)*

Illustrations by Matt Smith

I do not know what to say (a momentous first). What's worse, I do not know how to say it. Sixteen years practice as a compulsive liar and you begin to accept your role as a registered excuse-maker; certified truth contortionist. Still, after age six, the thrill of Sesame Street moral defiance just up and disappears. You are left to face the reality behind your evasive behavior, or constant procrastination....

It's not the little lies though. This is lying as an act of self-preservation. From what, I do not know. Well then, that's a lie too I guess. It would have to be from me; that false persona. I become whatever I suppose others want me to be. I do this for myself. For fear of who I may really be, I have buried the truth.

Sixteen years practice as a compulsive liar; one's reluctance in breaking the pattern is obvious. Trust that reality could be easier than a fabrication of self proves hard to accept. No number of self-esteem songs from nursery school can prepare us for the day we arrive in first grade without the right pencil. No number of self-help books from Barnes & Noble can instantly erase each of those

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# The PVPA (PIONEER VALLEY PERFORMING ARTS High School).

I am taking the time to write this article to tell about what our school is really like, and what we're all about.

We're different here, we're changing the rules of what high schools are "usually" or "supposed" to be like and I think it scares people. Though we have been quite popular with the Department of Education and with some reporters, there are other journalists that have not been so kind. The facts, then:

## WHERE IS IT LOCATED?

Hadley, Massachusetts. It's simple to get to, because it is right on Rt. 9 on your way to the Hampshire Mall, and is located right across from the town hall.

## HOW MANY STUDENTS?

The school decided that when they opened they

would only take one class at a time (classes meaning freshman, sophomore... etc.). So now since they are coming into their third year of existence they will have freshman, sophomore and junior classes. Each grade has 64 students. Once we have all four grades we will have a grand total of 256 students. Which for those of you, who do not know, is not very much, since the average high school contains over a thousand students.

## WHAT KINDS OF CLASSES ARE THERE?

We have everything from sign language to yoga. The course selection lists have many things to choose from academically, both elective and in performing arts. If enough students show an interest in something that is not available they try to find someone to teach it.

## WHAT ARE THE TEACHERS LIKE?

We get more and more teachers every year, and they are all wonderful. They come from all over New England to teach here. All are very

diverse, most teaching both an academic and performing arts course. One example: Brian Marsh has been an actor for over 30 years and directs the majority of our school plays. He teaches English, play/screenplay writing and this year, Shakespeare. Another: Susan Waters teaches ecology, science and biology courses; she also teaches Balkan singing and plays the fiddle.

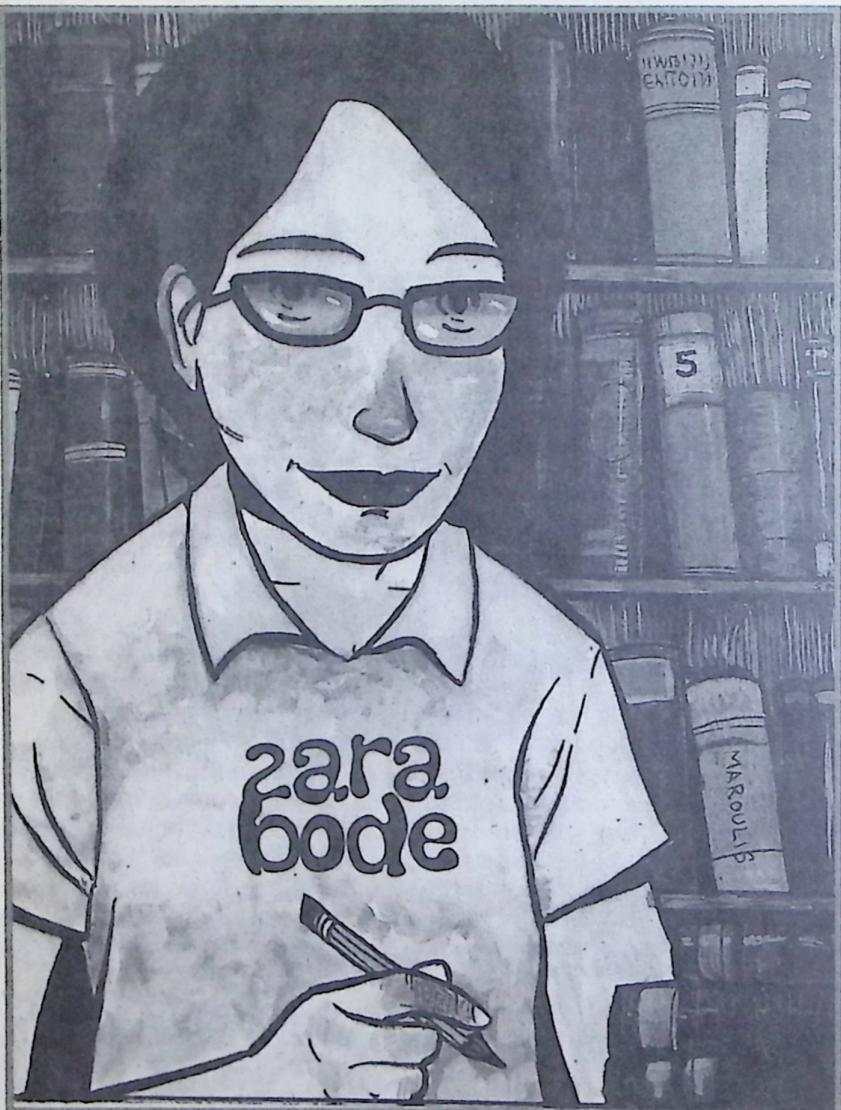
## WHAT'S A SCHOOL DAY LIKE?

Well, I do not want to scare any of you guys off or anything, but the school hours are similar to an adult workday. Monday through Thursday it is 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Friday, 8:30-2:30. When we are getting ready for a performance a typical school day can go from 8:30 a.m. to 10 p.m.! Right now ya'll must be saying to yourself, "How the hell do you get through a day like that!?" We were all asking the same thing when we first started the school. You get used to it.

We do have many breaks throughout the day, so that helps you. But at PVPA school is fun, and yes you have to learn, but they specialize in individual learning styles, focusing in on how you work and makes it so that you're not just sitting there listening to a teacher drone on about god knows what.

## HOW DO THE TEACHERS HAVE TIME TO FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU ARE LIKE?

When a new school year starts the new students get to come to the school first. They get the school to them-



selves for a few days getting to know the school and their teachers. They are given a chance to really get to know each other and the school. A few of the regular (return) students will also meet with them and tell them what it is like to be a student there. All the students really feel bonded to the school by the time school really starts and all the students return.

**WHAT ARE THE STUDENTS LIKE?**  
PVPA is like a family - bonded, close friends. Everyone is very open with each other and all are accepted for who they are. The students come from all over Massachusetts.

Everyone at the school is different in some way or another. But we are all coming to this school for the same reason so we also have many similarities.

**HOW MANY PERFORMANCES DO YOU HAVE TO DO?**

On average we have one show a month. Either a play production, showcase, music-oriented performance, or class project. Everyone gets to perform in at least one.

**WHAT ARE THEY LIKE?**

When we do something, we go all-out. Rehearsals, dress rehearsals, set, stage, design, lighting, sound, and programs. We take everything as if it were a professional show, because in a sense it is: We are a performance arts school after all! And the great thing is that everything is done by students — light boards, stage-managing, etc.

**IS THIS SCHOOL HARDER OR EASIER THAN OTHER SCHOOLS?**

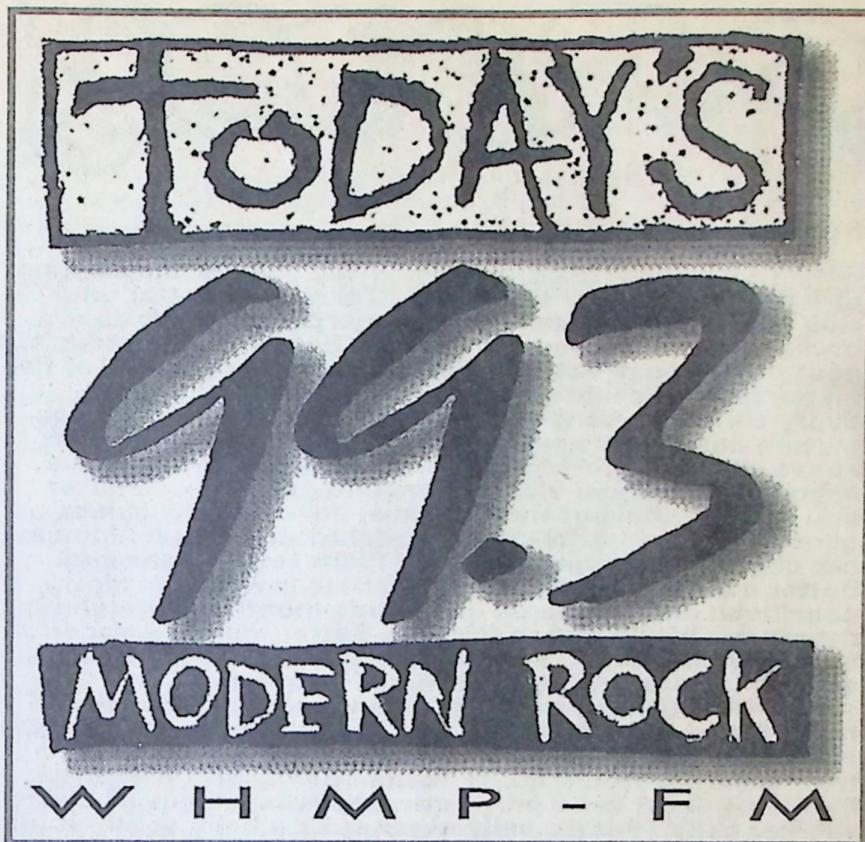
For some reason everyone thinks this is a slacker school, that we do not do anything all day but sit on our asses. But that is very untrue. We work very hard, and with everything else in our lives excluding school, I think what we do is phenomenal.

**HOW DO YOU GET HOMEWORK DONE WITH THIS SCHEDULE?**

School can get quite hectic once you have everything else in your life going on. I remember a time when I had musical rehearsals, choreography rehearsals, piano classes, softball, and extra credit work happening all at the same time! But your teachers understand your chaotic life and schedules, and if you work with them they can help you organize a plan that can work right for you. It is all about communication, but when you come here, you really have to make the most of everything — your time, and your motivation/dedication to work.

**HOW DO GRADES WORK?**

We do not have normal grades at our school, such as A, B, C. We do have benchmarks. Benchmarks list specific articles and information you must show that you know in order to prove you are deserving of passing the class. The benchmarks, sometimes pages long (depending on the class), can be as easy as solving a



simple algebraic equation for your Math class, to being able to discuss the Progressivism in the Political system in U.S. History. Benchmarks were chosen to represent our grades because they would be more beneficiary when you are applying to colleges - for admissions boards to see exactly what you've learned, instead of just some letter on a piece of paper.

**WOULDN'T YOU RATHER GO TO A REGULAR HIGH SCHOOL?**

Well, no. Yes, there are things you miss out on going to our school. We do not have school dances or sports teams. The usual "high school" stuff. But what I'm missing is nothing to the advantages of going to PVPA. You know you can ask any adult and 4 out of 5 will remember high school as a shitty experience. Cliques, bullies, gangs — you won't see that at PVPA.

**WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE BEST THING ABOUT GOING TO THIS SCHOOL?**

During my short (somewhat meaningless) teenage life, thus far, I would have to say going to PVPA has been the best thing that could ever have happened to me. The friends I have made, the goals I've achieved, and the experience I have gained - it's unbelievable. I could not be more grateful. PVPA has not changed me, it has released me. It has given me the environment to feel free, to open myself up so I can discover who I really am and to venture into everything I can be.

*Zara Bode is fifteen, lives in Northampton and is entering her second year at PVPA.*

*Illustration by Matt Smith.*

# PRETTY

by Maia Bissette

They were so pretty. They lived in the depths of a mountain under the ocean. There was Butter who was plump and pleasant and always pregnant. It didn't bother her... she loved the way her belly would stretch and pout out through her T-shirt. But in all of the years of her immortality she had never mothered her own young. Every child was born with dreams of the shore - the pop culture and excitement and chaos - they yearned for life above the water line. They wanted to dance across the beaches and attend vicious concerts. Butter was never one to deny souls of their dreams, so with a swift kiss goodbye and material gifts of celebration she would name her children with care and send them towards the sun. Butter only had daughters. Their father was a shadowy angel who only appeared every nine months to watch his daughter's births and to lay with Butter again. As soon as he was gone Butter couldn't remember his face or name, as if he were just a figment of her imagination.

Then there was Petal. She was famine thin and frail. She never smiled the way Butter would, but she wasn't exactly sad either. Petal would sometimes express a faint grin that would make Butter squeal with happiness. Petal had never been pregnant. She was jealous of Butter and her belly. Petal's belly was hardly a belly at all - it jutted in instead of out and her bones were so very defined. Sometimes she feared she would break.

One day it was the final day of Butter's latest pregnancy. Petal was applying blue lipstick in the mirror. Her tiny frame was draped with a creamy silk slip fringed with purple lace. Her long bony fingers fluttered about her face, brushing her hair out of her eyes and decorating her flesh with glittering oils and colorful angel dust. She licked her glossy, blue lips with her bar-belled tongue as she admired her pale pink nails.

Butter was watching her intently, "What's with all the glamour?"

Petal looked up shyly. "I don't know," she said meekly. "Today will be special, I know it."

Butter shrugged and picked up the fish food sitting next to Petal's barrettes. She turned to the goldfish swimming endlessly about the tiny glass bowl atop her night table. She kneeled down, tapping flakes into the water. Now it was Petal's turn to watch Butter.

Butter was wearing floppy, oversized jeans that were all stringy at the bottom. Her bare feet were adorned with countless toe rings and green toenail polish. Her bikini-cut underwear was protruding just above her leopard print belt. The tiny tee she was wearing rode up above her large stomach, and the kitten tattooed on her back was in plain sight. Her hair was yanked back into messy pigtails, sending red ringlet fly-aways about her forehead and neck. The image of Butter was topped off with grinning gapped teeth and a rainbow belly button ring that acted as a cherry on top of her swelling tummy.

Petal smiled. It made Butter squeal.

"What was that for?" Butter asked.

"You're so pretty," Petal answered.

Butter blushed and fiddled with one of her rings.

"So are you."

Petal turned to the mirror. She didn't look like

Butter. She wasn't tan and her cheeks weren't rosy. She was ghostly white, but she didn't think she was ugly.

Butter came up behind her and ran her tan fingers through Petal's platinum blonde hair.

"The angel is coming today," Butter whispered.

"I know," Petal breathed.

The rest of the day was pretty quiet. Petal strung pearls to give to Butter's baby while Butter sprawled across the shag carpet reading comic books and thinking of what to name her child.

"Letitia," Butter announced.

"Letitia," Petal repeated. It was a beautiful name. She started thinking of names for her own child, though she doubted she would ever have one. She dreamed about it all the time. She wanted her belly to grow, she wanted to feel the kicking, the morning sickness.

"Butter?" Petal said.

"Hmmm?"

"Why do you think the angel comes?"

Butter glanced at Petal, then looked away. She rubbed her belly, not knowing how to respond. She knew as much about the angel as she did about her parents and about why they lived in a mountain under water and why her children were always disappearing for the sake of modern culture: Nothing.

"Maybe he's trying to make people to make things better up there," she said, questioning her own reasons to believe that.

Petal was quiet for a moment, then she got up and started pacing about the room, biting at her lower lip.

"Why do you think..." she paused. "Why have I never had children?"

Suddenly the air became hushed. The soaking wet angel appeared in the room, tiny salt rivers streaming down his skin,

his pure, feathered wings dripping. But this time he wasn't alone. There was a new angel, equally soaked. His dark glowing skin and deep brown eyes clashed with his bleached hair. His wings had no feathers, clear and insect-like. Instead of folding across his back they dropped down like windows shielding him.

Petal's heart wilted at the sight of him. Her eyes glazed with wonder. Butter smiled her beaming, gapped-tooth smile. The angels merely greeted with the honesty of their eyes.

Letitia was born soon after. Her pudgy hands reached up, not towards her mother, but rather towards the shore gleaming high above them. They wrapped her fragile flesh in a cocoon of air and sent her floating to the surface where mortal hands embraced her in questioning surprise.

By morning the angels had left, but this morning was different. Butter still had her angel's face fresh in her mind, and his gentle name still echoed in her ears. She could still see the depth in his gleaming Asian eyes. She could feel the bleak glint of his cold belt buckle against her skin. Her fingertips trembled above her stomach where the fetus was already forming. She spoke to it. "Plinx," she whis-

pered. "Your father's name is Plinx."

Petal stumbled into the room feeling overwhelmed and speechless. Her hands were shaking in unexplainable glee.

Months passed as both their bellies slowly expanded. Petal wrote mass amounts of poetry and spent countless hours admiring the pout of her new figure. Her smile grew wider each day with the thought of her own child. Butter painted murals of Plinx all over the caverns of their home. She sang her kicking, unborn daughter to sleep at night and whispered to her all the good things she would encounter in her life.

Soon the day arrived, but this time no angels arrived with it. The girls sat silently, anticipating what would happen next. Impatience weighted down the room, sinking into the pores of the walls.

"Maybe they're not coming."

They looked at each other, but in each other's faces they found no anguish or sadness. Petal laughed out loud for the first time, and Butter reflected that laugh with a fountain of giggles. The heaviness of the room lifted, and their children were delivered into the happiness of their mothers' satisfaction.

Butter's daughter didn't look to the shore this time, but rather deep into her mother's face. Butter hugged her, stroking the soft tufts of red hair as she bewildered the tiny slits of eyes that gazed up at her. Butter named her Sabyr.

Petal had a son. He had the deep tan skin she'd always admired on others and pale blue eyes that dazzled her heart. As he struggled to roar all the confusion he felt off his petite lips she held him close and secretly named him Tiger.

Butter and Petal never saw the angels again, but constantly felt their presence in the light laughter of their children. Sabyr and Tiger grew, only knowing their fathers by the shadows they saw in their dreams. They were all so pretty together, in the mountain under the ocean.

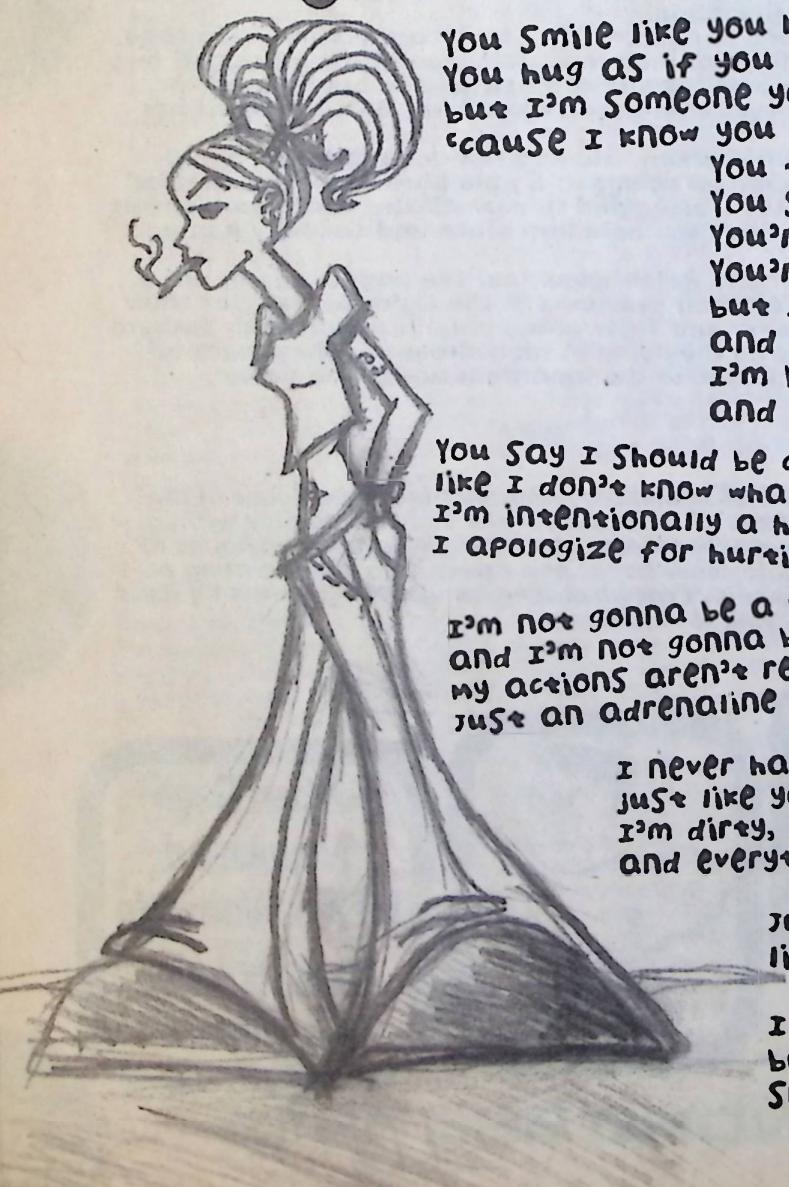
*Maia Bissette lives in Marlboro, Vermont in a little house in the BIG woods. She's 15 years old but she still likes to play with toys. A student at Brattleboro Union High School, she hopes to someday go into comic books as a career. When not writing or drawing, Maia enjoys snowboarding, sewing, singing with a Bass at hand and trying to skateboard.*



2 BRIDGE ST NOHO 586-1913

# SMILE

I Shiver,  
I tremble,  
I chatter and mumble,  
so maybe you can't quite figure  
me out.  
I'm the giver of cheap thrills,  
the queen of cocky spills,  
I act like I could take on the  
world,  
but I'm wilted and curled.



You smile like you know me,  
You hug as if you care,  
but I'm someone you could never be,  
'cause I know you wouldn't dare.

You try to prove hate,  
You say that I'm wrong,  
You're jealous of my date,  
You're angry with my song,  
but I'm sick of your mood swings  
and I'm tired of crying,  
I'm bored with you now  
and that's why you're lying.

You say I should be careful,  
like I don't know what I do.  
I'm intentionally a handful  
I apologize for hurting you.

I'm not gonna be a victim,  
and I'm not gonna be a killer,  
my actions aren't really sin,  
just an adrenaline filler.

I never have things easy,  
just like you've got it all right,  
I'm dirty, I'm sleazy,  
and everything is a fight.

Just fuck off and let me live,  
live with the fact that you  
hate me,  
I gave as much as I could give,  
but there are some things you  
should never see.

# THE PHONE BOOK IS STUPID

I looked in the phone book to see if I was in there

But I wasn't.

I looked at all the people with the last name of me

But I wasn't.

I don't know them and they don't know me.

Do you think they ever looked for me in the phone book?

I looked up phone in the phone book  
But nobody had that last name.

I looked up the last name dick in the phone book.

There were two dicks in the phone book.  
C. Dick and Jo Dick.

I once knew a guy who claimed to own  
Abe Lincoln's dick in a jar.

I looked up stupid in the phone book.  
No one had the last name stupid in the phone book.

I looked up ka-ka in the phone book.  
No one had the last name ka-ka but  
someone did have the last name Kaak.

B. Kaak and his phone number is there too.

Kaak makes me want to yak. So I looked up yak.

There was no one named yak in the phone book.

And no one named Yoda or Puss Nipple.

Needless to say,  
the phone book is stupid.

- ADRON TOMPKINS

Aaron Tompkins lives in Northampton.  
He is just learning how to read and draw.



29 Pleasant St Northampton  
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Pleasant Street Video: Your Ticket to New Worlds

# INTERVIEW WITH



I recently had the opportunity to interview Ben Folds, of the band Ben Folds Five. This talented trio from Chapel Hill, NC consists of Ben (r), piano; Robert Sledge (l), bass; and Darren Jesse(c), drums. The band has three albums out — their debut album Ben Folds Five was released in 1995. Cuts from their second release, Whatever and Ever Amen, are currently being played on radio stations all over the Valley. The most frequently played seem to be "Battle of Who Could Care Less," "Brick," and "Song for the Dumped." And their most recent release is Naked Baby Photos, which is live versions of songs from the first two albums, previously unreleased demos and cuts, and even a special little piece of fun which is the guys messin' around before a concert when someone, luckily, left the tape recorder on.

So here it is — without further adieu — my interview with Ben Folds...

Aundria: How do you write your songs, and where do you find inspiration?

Ben Folds: [Writing a song is all about] figuring out how to communicate a certain mood into a song. You want to communicate with a song that's unique to a song - you know, that you couldn't get across in an essay, or in a speech, or a work of art, or something like that. And when I know that I'm speaking that way, then I know that I've got something, and I work at it. But I don't really know where the inspiration comes from. (thoughtful pause) Usually it comes from having a certain kind of feeling and then realizing that I've got a song in my head or part of a song that's matching that, and then the melody and the chords and that sort of thing start to dictate the lyrics, which goes back to the original reason that the music came out in the first place. Does that make sense?

A: Yeah. So, where'd you guys grow up, and where did you meet?

BF: We all grew up in North Carolina, in different towns. And we all kinda ended up in Chapel Hill, 'cause it's kind of a musical place. And I was trying to put together a band, and I specifically

wanted a bass player and a drummer, and they were really the first people that I met upon moving to Chapel Hill. They didn't know each other and I didn't know them, and a month later we were playing, like, out playing gigs, and about six months later we had a record contract, and I guess a year later our first record was out. So we really just worked really hard and moved really fast 'cause I think none of us had anything going on (laughs) in our lives at worth mentioning.

A: How would you describe your music, because when people ask me I have a hard time trying to describe...

BF: I really don't. I'm not too good at that. I really just never do. When people say, "What kind of music do you play?" I just tell 'em, "Pop music, I guess."

A: What got you interested in music and in wanting to put together a band?

BF: Well I was interested in music I think from the time I could walk. I've always loved music. And I guess the idea grew that I could put together some kind of a band... (trails off, corrects himself) But really not originally, because I think I was tech-

nically able enough to think that maybe what I should do was be some kind of session player; you know, play for other people. And so I toyed with that but I never was very good at working for other people. And I had songs that I was writing too, and so, I think when I put together this band that was the point that I'd gotten really serious about the idea of getting my songs out there rather than just letting them sit, you know?

A: How do you resolve problems in the band, like disagreements over songs and stuff? Now, you write most of the songs yourself, right?

BF: Yeah, I write most of the songs. I mean, everybody in the band has a lotta ideas, and a lotta songs, and I guess I just tend to finish a lot of 'em. But you know, we're pretty good friends. We just separate a lot; we get away from each other a lot. You know, the bus pulls up in town and we scatter, we always have.

A: What kind of music did you listen to growing up, and what influences you now?

BF: Um, I think I'm inspired, and the rest of the band is too, by lots of new stuff. We're playing with a band called Travis; they're opening for us right now, and I was just talking to Fran, he's a singer for the band, and I was real excited to hear he knows Belle and Sebastian, 'cause they're a real inspiration to me. They're great.

A: What's their name?

BF: Belle and Sebastian, B-E-L-L-E, like "belly?" (he giggles)

A: (I finally get it) Oh, Ok.

BF: Ya, that band is real inspiring to me. And the Flaming Lips are a big inspiration to me, and I think The Band too. And then there's just a lot of really neat stuff out there, from Blues Explosion to, I don't know... even Alanis Morrisette. I like a

lot of music, I like when music speaks.

A: I saw you guys on Conan O'Brian, and I was wondering if you've done any other TV shows.

BF: We haven't done much TV, not in the United States anyhow. We did "Sessions at 54th," and that's a half-hour of us just playing. It's a really interesting show. Have you heard of it?

A: Yeah, but I've never really watched it.

BF: It's really good.

A: I'll check it out. Ok, describe a day in the life of Ben Folds.

BF: Right now I'm a life support system for playing shows. Basically I'm waking up on the bus, getting off the bus, walking into a club, going straight to the deli tray and getting a bowl of cereal. Then, straight to the stage, doing sound check, conserving my energy, going back on the bus and curling up into a ball, doing a little bit of press, doing a show, talking to a couple of fans, and then go back on the bus, write a few letters, then curl up into a ball on the bunk again. (we laugh) That's basically what I'm doing right now.

A: Ok - now the fun questions. You know how Barbra Walters is always trying to make people cry? (he laughs) If you were being interviewed by her, what would make you cry?

BF: Um... "Why are your bottom teeth crooked?" No, um... I don't know. I think that would be a by-the-moment thing, don't you think? Like, she'd be stabbing around until she found a reaction 'cause I don't know what that would be with me. I'm not a big cryer, so that'd be interesting. (laughing) I've been in some pretty intense, weepy moods over the last six months though, cause sometimes shit'll get so intense. Like, your personal life goes to shit once you start

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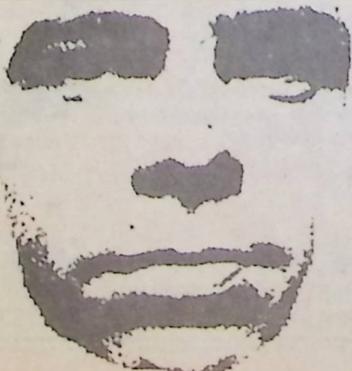
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doing this job, and then like, I remember being trapped in a mob of like... 200 people, that were all surrounding me and pushing in, and I couldn't get out or get to a car, and uh, something about that almost made me cry.

A: Oh my god.

BF: Yeah, it was kinda weird.

A: Ok, here's a cheerier question. If your house was on fire, what material possession would you grab first?

BF: (long pause) It'd all have to burn 'cause I don't really have anything left in my house anymore. Um, I love my Steinway (piano). I'd want that to be outta there. I mean, I might just grab my address book and fucking get a slice of pizza. I'll call my friends and tell 'em my house burnt down.

A: (after I've stopped laughing) What do you do in your spare time, why you get some?

BF: I'm gonna do some traveling soon. I mean, I know I travel anyway, but I was thinking about going to Prague or maybe Australia. Somewhere that I've been to enjoyed, and that I can explore further now.

A: What about like TV or movies or books? Anything in the recent past that's stood out?

BF: I read the diary of Mohammed Ali recently, that was good, I liked that book. I saw this kind of stupid movie called *The Edge*—

A: (the movie critic in me kicks in) With Alec Baldwin and Anthony Hopkins? I was gonna go see that but for some reason it had really limited release around here.

BF: It's just a bear chasing a couple guys around all day. Anthony Hopkins was great. And I can see why someone would be excited about working on the movie - the premise was amazing. But it was too loud. The movie was turned up for shits and giggles too high. It was just too much...

A: I hate that! When I saw *Star Wars* for the first time, we had to like, tell the manager to turn it down because we couldn't hear what Han was saying with our hands over our ears - you know, trying to muffle the damn Death Star noises...

BF: And it wasn't just the volume being overdone, it was the whole flick. Everything about it had to be a big hairy deal. That's not the way life is! I don't want to see that. It was all like (making crashing, whooshing noises, then in a deep, mocking announcer voice) HOPKINS! BALDWIN! IN THE ROLES OF THEIR CAREERS! When it was really just about that fucking bear anyway.

A: Do you guys have any demands - like food or weird stuff you ask for backstage during a show?

BF: Our contract asks for stuff like hummus and tabouli and soy milk and shit like that... (laughing) We're boring, man. (This is the part where I go on and on about how

much I love their albums, how talented they are, and mostly how powerful and wonderful their lyrics are... When I finally shut up, he says:)

BF: Well, thanks, that means a lot... I really like that. I mean... If I could have done one thing with the album, that's what I would have wanted to do with it, you know? So it's really cool hearing that from a fan. There's a lot of things you can want to accomplish with a record: you can want to make it a big, fun record, or you can want to make it something that's going to blow people's doors out, like Nirvana - there's millions of things you can do with it. But the songs - lyrically - that's my focus. And it's really cool to hear that what you focused on is being appreciated.

A: The song "Brick:" was that based on a personal experience or was that from your head?

BF: No, it's extremely accurate. Darren brought in the chorus (breaks into song) "She's a brick and I'm drowning..." a while ago and it always stuck with me, and I always thought it was cool, and then I started trying to find what it was about; the reason it hit me. And it reminded me basically of 12th grade, my high school, and so I wrote the verses and all the rest of the stuff around that chorus from a very personal point of view, even though that was Darren's chorus.

A: Ok - what are you guys doing next?

BF: Well, we have some UK dates to do. After that it's time to start thinking about the next record and um, I'm pretty excited about it. I feel good about what I'm writing for the next record right now. It's gonna have kind of a stormy feel to it if it's anything like what I hear right now - I think it'll be neat.

A: I noticed you guys don't have a guitar in any of your songs. Your piano, however, plays a large part in your albums. Why don't you think pianos are used by more artists who perform "rock" songs?

BF: People don't use them much recently because rock and roll has become such an industry. It hasn't been done much recently, and it hasn't sold much recently, so people don't think about it. And, it's not easy to pull off live; it's not easy to carry a piano with you. All those things. It was just wide open. To me, the idea of a band is piano, bass and drums. It has a huge commercial value, even if the songs and the playing isn't all the way up to snuff for me. Just the idea of it seems to be a really good idea, and um, I don't know... I always thought it was a good idea.

A: Ok, well, that's about it... I want to thank you unbelievably much for this interview. I appreciate it more than words can express!

BF: Aw, no problem!

A: Thanks very much, Ben. Later!

BF: All right, thanks, honey. We'll see ya.

(Aundria is a senior at Southwick High School, and she wishes that MTV would bring back "The State." Ben Folds Five is her favorite band. She begins an internship at VMag in the fall.)

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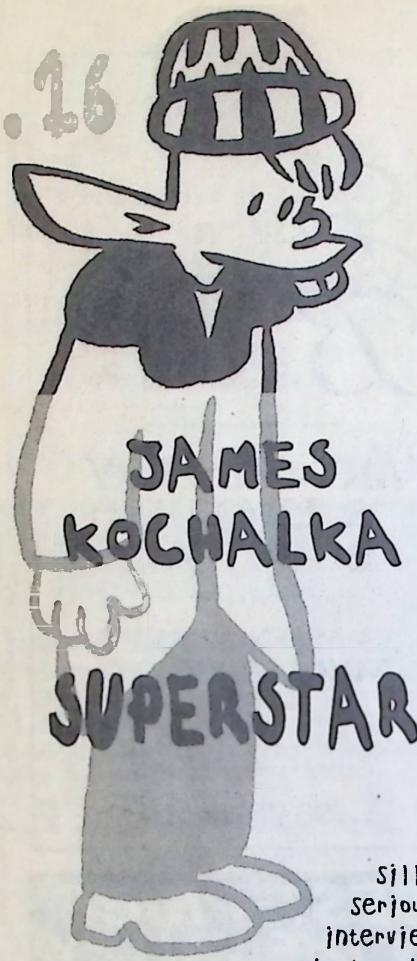
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P. 16



Silly  
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interview  
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**JAMES KOCHALKA  
SUPERSTAR HAS BEEN  
MAKING HIS NAME  
KNOWN ALL AROUND THE  
WORLD WITH HIS CRAFTY  
COMICS AND SILLY SONGS.**

James, who wrote the book of love? God, I suppose, if such a character exists.

Why do people fall in love? I guess we bond to another person for added protection against the cruel, cruel world. Plus it feels good!

Can someone be in love with more than one person at a time? Well, I love my wife and my cat. But I love my wife a lot, lot more. I guess an even better question would be, "Is my cat a person?" Yes, she is. A very cute fuzzy retarded person.

How do you face the riddle of life? Well, it's not much of a riddle.

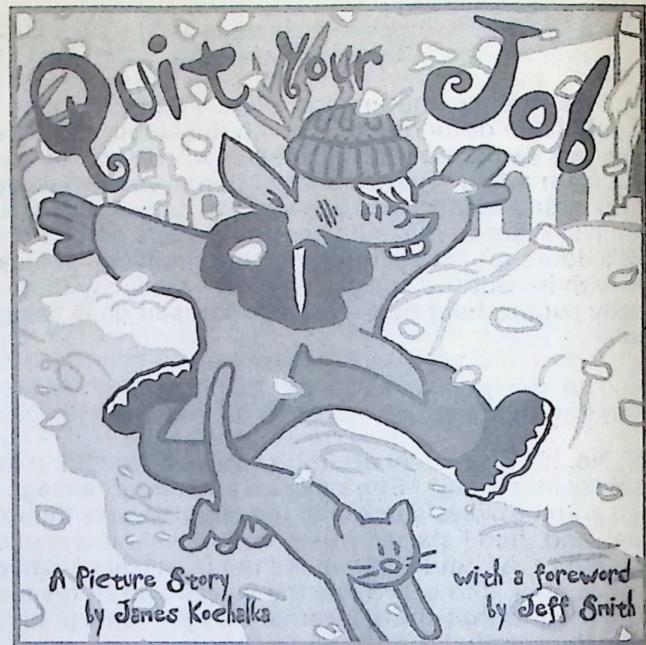
We live because that's what the chemical compounds that make us up do when they're in a situation like this. When you realize life is just physics and chemistry there's not much to worry about.

So, what happens to our consciousness when we die? I would say our consciousness stops working when we die. Since it's an electro-chemical process, and such processes end with death, then consciousness has got to go too.

Damn. Got a favorite color? All colors are created equal.

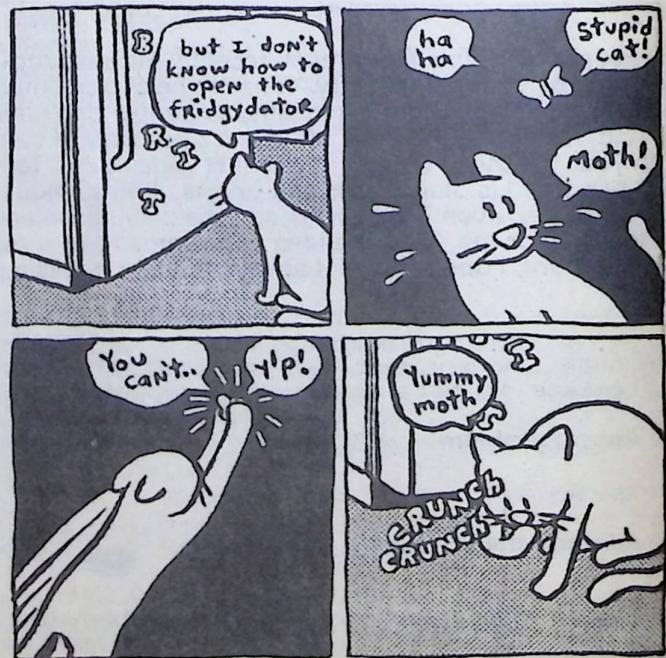
Why's that? All colors are useful in painting.

Why do you live in Burlington? It's a utopia. Big enough that there's always fun stuff to do. Small enough that everything's within walking distance. Lake Champlain is huge and beautiful. I like snow. In big cities



I'm terrified by the mass of humanity all around me. Here I'm quite at ease.

What're its coolest things? I'm actually famous here! Plus there's a fantastic vibrant music scene. Some of my favorite bands are local: the Pants, Missy Bly, Bag of Panties.





The uncoolest?  
Too many hippy kids begging for change. But they're kinda cute too.

Burlington is on the shore of Lake Champlain. Ever seen Champy, the lake's monster?

Naw, but I saw the Loch Ness monster up in Scotland. He was only about two feet long and looked like a fish.

Ever seen a flying saucer?  
No but I had an alien visitation a couple of months ago.

Uh-huh.  
The alien had two hands on the end of each arm and a huge bulbous head. He was in my bedroom, I woke up and he was walking towards my bed. I was terrified. I tried to get up but I couldn't... I suppose it might have been a dream.

A dream... not a funky mushroom? Right now the thought of taking any drug makes me feel sick. Although I enjoy an occasional cigarette. Nicotine offers a pretty good high and it doesn't incapacitate you or last too long. Smoking is a little gross though. They should make snortable nicotine powder.

Yeah and sell it in those long pixie sticks. In Coober Skeber #2 you did an "illegal" Hulk story (one not approved by Marvel Comics) which I really liked. Any desire to legitimately tackle Hulk or any other mainstream comics character?

Yeah, I'd love to do a Hulk story for Marvel. The Hulk is perfectly in tune with my comics... an alienated mental cripple lashing out at the world. Gosh, I feel like the Hulk sometimes. Did I tell you I do 31 push-ups every day?

I'm impressed. I can only do 15. So, how'd you learn how to draw? I learned to draw by drawing. I think that's the only way possible. In second grade I drew a lot of big battle scenes between robots and monsters. In third grade I started drawing comics. By 12th grade I had drawn 2000 or so pages of comics. Then I spent seven years oil painting, then back to comics.

What's the essence of good storytelling? Well, it's NOT a beginning, middle, and an end. I guess I try and sort of riff on life's rhythms in a way that clarifies some hidden aspect of

the human experience.

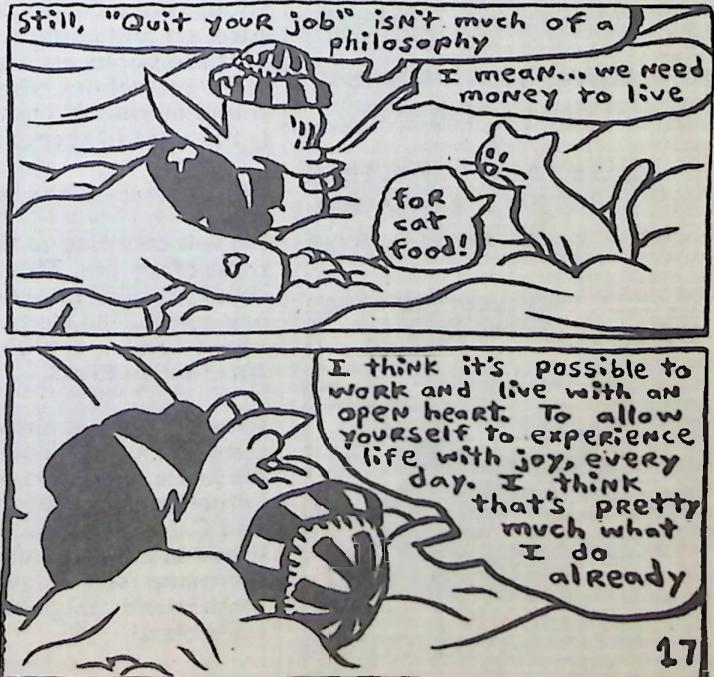
You're pretty darn prolific. How do you do it?

I draw quickly and often. Rather than trying to just learn how to draw well, I really concentrated on learning to draw quickly. Jeez, I must have drawn over 300 pages last year.

You've got three collections of your work coming out this month: *Tiny Bubbles*, *Quit Your Job*, and *Magic Boy and Girlfriend*. What can you tell us about each?

*Tiny Bubbles* is about the breakdown of the human body in the face of advancing technology. It's set in the dystopian present, on the moon. It's autobiographical, but of course I draw myself as that goofy looking elf Magic Boy. *Quit Your Job* is a cute little morality play about the struggle between fantasy and reality. How much of your imagination do you have to give up in order to live and work at whatever mind-numbing job you have? How can you open your heart up to the world's beauty?

You gotta take time-outs, like Magic Boy does in *Job*, when he takes the





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time to really notice his surroundings following a fresh snowfall. You know, I really loved *Quit Your Job*, especially the way you capture the movement, the simple grace and humor of cats. Plus Magic Boy's cat talks just like my cats do. What about Magic Boy and Girlfriend? It's a collection of my early mini-comics. The stories are mostly

about romance, sex, and longing. Also, art and comics. All three of these books are chock full of elves and robots, which must sound incredibly cheesy but really has a lot of secret meaning.

What does the future hold for Magic Boy?

He will continue to live variations of my life. This fall he should appear in my comics theory comic, *The Horrible Truth About Comics*, published by Alternative Press.

Is there a James Kochalka Superstar game plan for world domination? It's just a natural expansion of influence. In addition to the U.S. and Canada I've had work published in Mexico, Australia, Germany [see above], the Netherlands, England, and Japan. It's a blast!

Have any advice for young cartoon-

**ZAUBER KNABE UND DIE DUMMEN SCHLANGE** VON JAMES KOCHALKA



ists?

Make your own photocopied mini-comics. Sell them in local stores and send free copies to all your favorite cartoonists. That's how I did it and just look at me now!

Tell us about your music. I write songs every day, while I'm walking around, on the bus or at work I sing quietly to myself. It must seem a little nuts. My latest CD, *Monkey vs. Robot* [reviewed way back in VMag 2], was named "best indie record of the year" by the College 500.

Tell us about your as-yet-unrecorded rock opera, "Carrot Boy the Beautiful."

Well, it's probably the weirdest American musical composition of the 20th century. Quite hummable though. Basically an evil scientist decides to take revenge

upon the world by creating an army of carrot men. He fails and ends up with just one cute little carrot boy that everyone loves. But they still hate the scientist.

Your lyrics are often silly-funny, almost child-like in their purity. How do you nurture the child within you? Well, as a child I decided never to grow up. And so I've resisted as well as I can. Basically I try and stay open-minded and act silly. And piercingly honest. And silly silly silly.

Do you like toys and/or action figures?

Yeah, but a big mistake I made one day as a kid was to put all my toys away and stop playing with them. I was embarrassed for my older brother to see me playing with toys. So now I can't quite remember how to play with the same intensity I did as a child.

That's sad. Do you have any favorite toys?

My wife just brought me back some toy wrestlers from Mexico. They're all identical figures with different, hand-painted costumes. Very low quality. I love them.

Got a website?  
Yeah - [www.indy-world.com/kolchalka](http://www.indy-world.com/kolchalka) - I also have my own font for Mac computers which you can download from - [http://www.bighavy-world.com/burlington\\_bands/jkochalka](http://www.bighavy-world.com/burlington_bands/jkochalka)

Very cool.  
Got a day job, too?  
Yeah I'm a



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waiter at the Peking Duck House, a Chinese restaurant in Winooski, Vermont.

What's the best dish they make? Szechuan crispy noodle is good, but it's not on the menu. Ask for it. And give me a giant tip.

Closing words of wisdom? Well, we all age and die I guess. Lately my right hip hurts a lot, damaged by waiting on tables and also from my spastic stage persona. After a show my muscles and joints are so battered I can barely walk home. I've got to learn how to live with life. I suppose we all do.

Yup.



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## part 2: THE STORY OF SAUSAGE FINGERS

The mood inside the VFW was getting festive. Everyone had finished off the boiled eggs. Matt and I drank many free beers and moved onto margaritas served in big salted glasses, garnished with pineapple wedges. Matt was getting it on with a couple of Vietnam Vets while I was diagramming traps on bar napkins with a big Sharpie.

The Super Sharpie is a good thing for scrawling dates and times on the inside of bathroom stalls; but when drafting intricate diagrams on bar napkins, the Super Sharpie just saturates the napkin with smelly black ink, shreds the napkin, and leaves many permanent black spots on the bar. After ten napkins I had the plan laid-out; but I couldn't figure out the most important detail. So I swiveled my chair to the right and joined the fun on the other side of my shoulder.

"You guys remember Alice?" said Matt laughing.

"Remember these guys?" Matt said to me.

I looked at them for a few seconds. "Hey what's going on," I said, "you guys still throw those crazy parties?"

"No," laughed the tallest one. "This is about as wild as it gets." He signaled to the woman behind the bar and she brought over a round of shots.

The memory came flooding back.

"Can I stay at Matt's for

the weekend?" I asked my mother years ago.

"I want you home by Sunday night," she said.

It was late Friday afternoon. Matt's father and his friends were drinking beer on the porch. They were dressed in their old army fatigues and marking their faces with camo-grease.

"Hi," Matt said.

"Hi, Matt," I said. "What's going on?"

Matt shrugged his shoulders. He was wearing camouflage cut-offs and a matching t-shirt.

"C'm over here, Matt,"

Matt's father said.

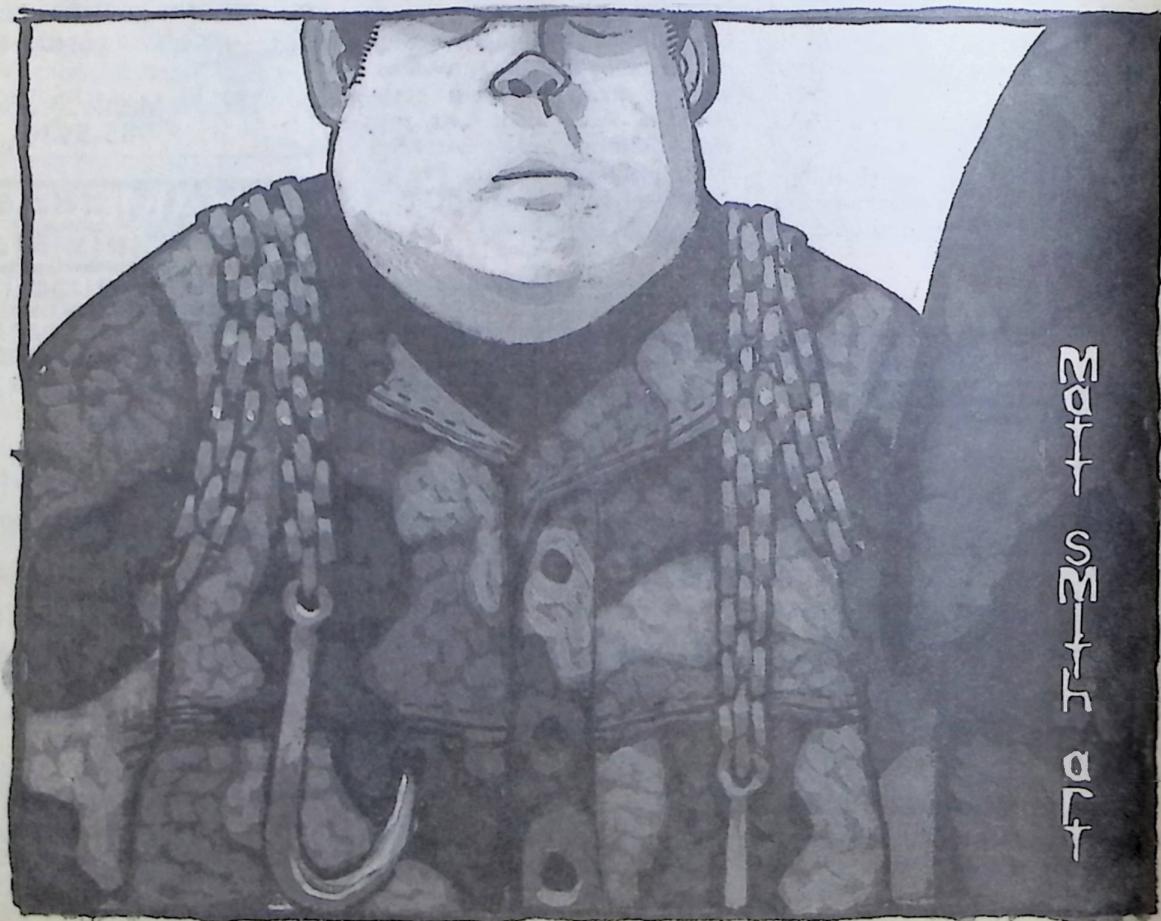
Matt's father painted Matt's face with black and olive drab stripes.

"Get his knees," called out the tall one. Matt's father rubbed black grease on the back of Matt's knees and then he looked up at me. "You can't go out on a ambush looking like that," he said.

Someone gave me a black t-shirt. I put it on. Someone else

threw me a bush hat. I put that on and folded the rim up. "Can I paint my own face?" I asked. The tall one handed me a mirror and a tin of black grease. I painted Alice Cooper eyes on my face and some black little frown marks on the edges of my mouth. "Welcome to my nightmare, mother-fuckers!" I screamed.

They all hooted and someone handed me a beer. I cracked it, took a sip and checked out the scene. Matt's father was sitting in the big chair talking to the tall guy. There was a short, fireplug of a man standing in the corner. He had huge shoulders; thick arms; and fingers resembling fat meat-sausages. The sausages were wrapped around a shiny meat cleaver. The handle was wrapped with double-sided sticky electrical tape to accommodate the large grip of the sausage-hand. At first, it appeared sausage fingers was repeatedly smelling his hand. "Did they smell like sausages, too," I thought to myself. He brought his hand to his



BY JIM ZALESKY

# YOUNG CHEAPEST HOUSE WHISKEY...

face once more and then put his hand on the table and revealed an empty beer can. He reached into the cooler and pulled out his huge fist of dripping hairy sausages. I stopped watching sausage hands. There was one more guy, holding field glasses to his head looking through a large hole in the window screen. I motioned Matt outside.

"What's going on Matt?" I asked.

"They're going on a raid tonight," Matt said.

"And what's our part in this?" I asked.

"I think we're just tagging along. Everything seems to be well planned-out. The guy with the binoculars is waiting for the farmer to pass out," explained Matt.

"They're not going to hack-up the farmer once he passes out, are they?" I asked.

"No it really has nothing to do with the farmer," Matt said. Matt ran onto the porch and came back out sipping a beer. "The farmer's wife died about a year ago. Old age I think. He's about 70. Anyways, after she died he started drinking heavily. He's sort of crazy now from all the booze. So, over the past year he stopped giving a shit about the farm. He still feeds the livestock but does little else except start drinking around noon."

"Of course, after the chores are done," I said.

"Like I said he's sort of crazy," Matt said. "Anyways, the bank foreclosed on his farm. Everything is going to be auctioned-off. He's a nice guy and everything but he doesn't own a damn thing anymore. Not even the livestock."

We went back on the porch and grabbed a few more beers.

The sun was down and night was coming on. "He's ready to go down," said the guy with the field glasses.

"Let me have a look," I said. He handed me the fieldglasses and pointed to a house about a mile away. There was a field with a bunch of cows standing around. There was a house with a porch. There was a man staggering on the porch motioning his hands to nobody. There was a couch. The man gave the finger to nobody and fell on the couch. "He's down," I said.

I turned around. Everyone was wearing a pack, except sausage hands. He had a big chain draped over his shoulders. The ends of the chain crisscrossed his chest and hung by giant steel hooks from the links by his armpits.

We made it out to the cow field and sat in the tall grass until the tall guy came back. "He's out cold," said the tall guy.

"Let's do it," said Matt's father. He pumped two shells into the shotgun and hurried into the tall grass. The other guy counted to twenty and shot a flare into the sky. The sky broke into a crimson glow. He reloaded and shot another flare at a lower angle. The immediate horizon blew into a fluorescent green. Matt and I stood up. Matt's father, kneeling on one knee, fired at a cow. Half the cow's head sprayed into the red night and the other half whipped the cow around on to its side. Just then sausage hands ran to the scene, chain jingling, and holding the meat cleaver close to his side. The green flare died. The red flare dimmed. Matt and I sat down.

"Did you know this was going to happen?" I asked.

"I knew we were getting a cow," he said.

Matt's father returned to the spot with the shot gunbroken across his arm. "What's the time?" he asked.

"Twelve minutes," the tall guy said.

Just then sausage hands jogged into the spot with two sides of beef strapped to his body with the chain.

"Two minutes off your pace," said Matt's father.

"The flare only lasted for eight, I had to finish in the dark," said sausage hands. Sausage hands jogged off into the dark. The rest of us walked back to the farm.

Matt and I woke that morning to the smell of roasting meat. I stood and looked out at the day. Cars were parked out front, another was making its way up the hill and a bunch of people were standing around a smoking pit drinking beer. I left the porch and joined the crew by the pit. The pit was filled with white coals and a giant glowing ball of chain. Matt's father was standing by the pit.

"I didn't know you guys were having a party today," I said.

"That's why we got the beef last night," he said.

"Is that it?" I said, pointing at the glowing ball of chain.

"Yeah, it's Chef's specialty," he said.

"What chef?" I said.

He pointed at sausage hands. Sausage hands was cooking something in a big pot on a gas grill. He was wearing a "Kiss the Cook" apron and a big floppy white chef's hat.

"How's the sauce comin'?"



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yelled Matt's father.

"It has to reduce for another hour, the spice hasn't quite come through yet," said sausage hands.

I felt like someone played a joke on me and I still didn't get it or that I had a really weird fucking dream last night.

"I had him pegged for a serial killer," I said.

Matt's father laughed. It finally dawned on him that I was still freaked-out from the night before.

"I was in the same platoon with the guys you met on the porch last night," said Matt's father. "Chef was different. He stretched two years at a culinary arts institute into three to avoid the draft. He studied everything he could possibly study but eventually there was nothing left for him to study. When he graduated, the war was still going on, and so, off to Vietnam he went. Chef and I started our tours within a week of each other. We basically hung low and watched how things were done."

Matt's father reached into his shorts and pulled out a bag.

"You old enough to get high?" he asked.

"Sure," I said.

Matt's father lit up and inhaled deeply and handed me the joint. The tall guy immediately joined us. I passed it off to him and exhaled.

"You tellin' him about Chef?" the tall guy said bringing the joint to his lips.

"Yeah," said Matt's father. "Chef was really personable. The guys liked him and it seemed he knew everyone at the camp but he couldn't deal with the fear. I thought he would really lose his mind for real. Most guys just turned off everything going on in their heads; sort of like holding your breath mentally. But Chef couldn't do it and it started to show in his eyes. He started to get a real crazy

# CHOPS SPECIAL SAUCE

look. I thought he wasn't going to make it. But one day a pig wandered across a landmine. He just walked off into this field towards the pig. We just stood back thinking. *This is it, he can't take it anymore.* We all figured that he was hoping he would step on a mine of his own and end it all right there. But he made it to the pig and knelt beside it. Five minutes later he was hustling back with two sides of pork under each arm. He was laughing and his crazy look was gone."

"Anybody like barbecue?" he asked," said the tall guy laughing. "Basically all we ate were c-rations from WWII and powdered eggs. So we were all like, yeah, barbecue. When we got back we stashed the pork and Chef and I started to dig a pit by the latrines. See we wanted this pig for ourselves so we had to be discrete; you know an officer could come by anytime, see the ribs and say that's wrong, and take them for himself. We stuffed the pit with broken crates and rice stalks. It looked like we were on latrine-burning duty. Chef went over to the mechanics pool and brought back a long chain. Then he ran off to the officers mess tent and came back with six dozen eggs. First he rubbed down the sides of pork with black pepper and some red stuff. Then he cracked all the eggs into one side of pork. Two other guys lifted the side of pork and chef put the other side on top of it. Then he wrapped the whole thing tightly with the chain. We tossed it into the pit and four hours later we had barbecue and eggs.

"It was so fucking good," said Matt's father. "The chains glowed red hot searing the flesh and locking in the juices. We unwrapped the thing on a big piece of canvas and carefully separated the two sides. There was a giant poached egg in one half that had all these yokes sticking out of it. Chef started serving the other half scraping off the blackened crust. Underneath the crust the meat had turned into a crispy bacon that tasted like smoked ham. He hacked off a whole tenderloin and brought it back to the officer's mess. I'm sure the cooks ate it all. But word got out about our chef and Chef started networking. People would drop stuff off that he needed in exchange for a piece of the next barbecue.

"Yeah Chef was alright then," said the tall guy. "A patrol became a potential shopping trip for Chef. Every time he went out on patrol looking for the enemy he always had one eye open for groceries. He came up with some real good stuff. Actually one time he was out in the field butchering

a pig and he drew enemy fire. We all laughed and dropped to the ground and gave him cover fire. Luckily there wasn't a whole platoon out in that tree line or we would've all been greased."

"But after a while the brass got wind of Chef and they took him away," said Matt's father. "We didn't blame him, but we definitely missed his barbecues."

"Remember that time that guy lost his leg in a firefight?" said the tall guy. He looked at me with serious eyes.

"Oh yeah," said Matt's father.

"He was screaming for someone to go back and get his leg," said the tall guy. He kept saying he wanted Chef to cook his leg so he could eat it on the way back on the medevac."

"That's sick", I said. The two laughed.

"Why don't you go wash your face," said Matt's father, laughing harder.

I grew silent and very paranoid. I motioned to the waitress at the bar for another margarita. "Make it strong and lots of salt on the rim. And another round for my friends," I said. The waitress looked at me.

"Anything," I said, "your cheapest house whiskey."

I swiveled around in my chair once again to rejoin the party. I was straight-faced and everyone else was smiling at me. I gulped hard and took a chance.

"Is Chef here?" I asked.

"Hey Chef," called the tall guy.

Everyone was laughing as Chef walked

out of the bathroom.

"Is your father here, too?" I asked Matt.

"No. He's flying in on Friday," said Matt smirking.

"I hate you Matt. Fuck all of you," I said, breaking into laughter.

"So there's a party next weekend."

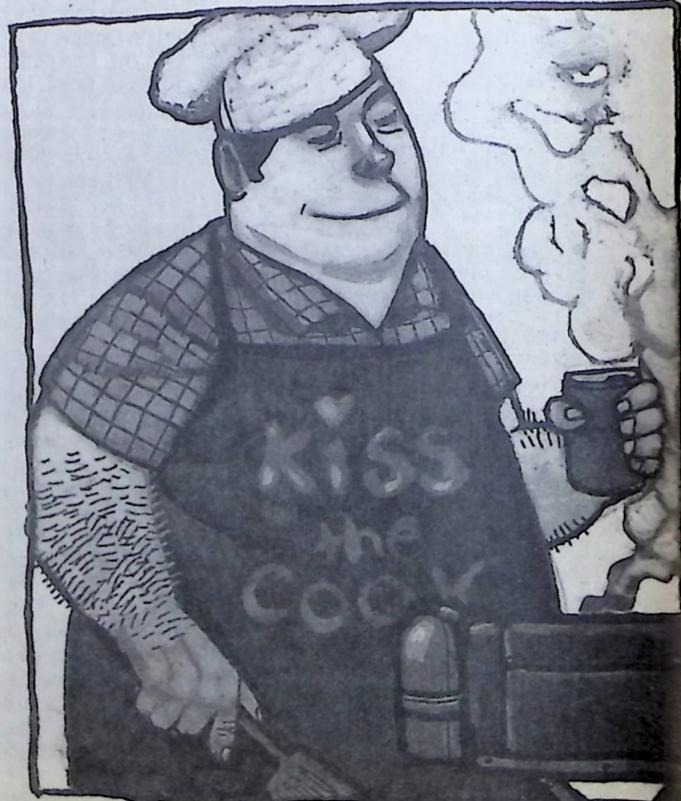
"Yep," said Matt.

"So what's with all the coyote bullshit?" I said.

"Oh the coyote is no bullshit," said Chef. He reached over and grabbed the pineapple wedge off my margarita. "I'm going to roast one with a big pineapple in its belly." He bit into the pineapple wedge. "We have the rest of the week to catch one. Let me explain. Back in Vietnam when the brass got hold of me for their own personal pleasure, I was shipped around to cook for generals and VIP's. Congressmen even flew over to sit at the tables where my meals were being served. But one night I had to cook for some ARVN Generals."

I was confused.

"Generals in the Army of the Republic of Vietnam," explained Chef. "The good guys we were fighting for. So they wanted a dish called Royal Dog. The dish wasn't clearly explained to me. So, I figured I would just cook Peking Duck except use a dog. I served it with a brown sauce,





similar to hoisin sauce but different. They loved it. It was the best dog they had ever ate. The sauce was the balls though. I've served the sauce many times at my own restaurant, but with veal or beef; but it never tasted as good as it did with the dog. What can I say, the seasoning only blended really well with dog. So, hopefully next weekend we'll all be eating dog." Chef laughed at the look on my face.

"Don't worry, the market's delivering a pig. I'll butcher some of Matt's chickens, so there will be plenty of food for the squeamish. But I'm telling you this dish is absolutely delicious."

"Well," I said, grabbing the bar napkin, "I have the plan for the trap right here. I hope you brought your chain."

I was sitting on the porch with Chef late Thursday afternoon when the bells started ringing. I looked at Chef and Chef looked at me, both of us with surprised looks on our faces. "The trap worked!?" I thought to myself. Chef told me earlier it would be no big deal if we didn't catch a coyote. But I was thrilled at the idea that my trap might of worked and Chef seemed very happy at the idea of finally getting to cook Royal Dog again.

The trap was just a cleverly presented pit covered with paper. We dug it by the chicken coop. We found a garden shop that sold viles of coyote urine. The scent of coyote urine can be used to keep rabbits away from your tomatoes, but at the same time it attracts coyotes. So we soaked the area in coyote urine. I strung some bells on the floor of the pit.

Chef looked into the pit. "Is it a coyote?" he asked.

I looked into the pit. "That's our boy," I said.

Chef jumped into the pit. There was muffled hacking noises and two minutes later Chef threw up two sides of coyote.

"You got a hose?" Chef said. I went to get the hose while Chef strung the meat on two hooks he had hung on the clothesline. I brought the hose to Chef and rinsed the dirt off the meat. He went

back into the house and came back out with Matt. Matt was holding a canvas baseball bat bag with one alu-

minum bat in it. Chef took the bat out of the bag, handed it to me and put the coyote meat into the canvas bag as Matt held it open. Chef took the bat from my hand and started beating the bag on the ground. "You got to break-up the bones a bit, that's the secret. All the flavor's in the bone marrow."

That was it. Chef packed the meat in a large beer cooler filled with ice. Matt drove Chef to the Asian market so he could pick up the sauce ingredients. I spent the rest of the twilight filling in the grave.

The Royal Dog was a big hit at the party. The meat fell off the smashed bones. We ate it over white rice with Chef's special sauce.

23

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**THE RESULTS OF VMAG'S WORST OF THE VALLEY READERS' POLL**  
as voted upon by you, the reader (some of you anyway), and as sorted, deciphered and tabulated by our assaying assistant, the detail-oriented and self-motivated (says so on her resume) Andrea Carlin, and as presented here by the poll's credulous creators, Chet and Bunny.



## PEOPLE

**WORST ELECTED OFFICIAL/ POLITICIAN.** A 3-way tie between Phil Sullivan, Richie Neal and Jesse Helms.

**WORST LOCAL COP.** Seems everyone has a favorite but the only agreed-upon response was "every single one." Our favorite response: "Hold it, let me read the ticket."

**WORST LANDLORD.** Again, the winner is a vague "mine." Mr. Roper (of *Three's Company*) got a vote, though.

**WORST DEVELOPER.** A tie between Michael Sissman and Bill Gates. One dim bulb picked Kodak.

**WORST (BIGGEST) "CRY BABY."** Monica Lewinsky (we sent this particular ballot in to Scully for an FBI lab analysis).

**WORST MOVIE REVIEWER.** John Morrison of the *Valley Advocate*. Many thumbs down.

**WORST PERFORMANCE BY A BAND (LOCAL).** Ed Vadas (as one entry put it, "in any form").

**WORST PERFORMANCE BY A BAND (NATIONAL).** Crystal Method, at Pearl Street, in a "faked performance."

**WORST STREET PERFORMER.** Accordion man. Runner up: "That dude with the violin that has no strings."

**WORST STREET PERSON.** "The screaming man with the bad wig."

**WORST BUS DRIVER.** Otto from *The Simpsons*. Duuuude.

**WORST PIERCER (PAIN/INFECTION).** "The one at the mall." But which mall? All malls?

**WORST BIG FISH IN A SMALL POND.** Another tie: Phil Sullivan and Eric Suher.

## PLACES

**WORST WOMEN'S BATHROOM.** Bart's, Northampton.

**WORST MEN'S BATHROOM.** Ye Old Watering Hole. Urinal's a trough. No door on the one stall. No secrets.

**WORST (SCARIEST) BAR.** City Cafe.

**WORST (SCARIEST) PLACE TO BE AFTER DARK.** Tie: Holyoke and Frat row, UMass.

**WORST STREET (IN NEED OF CONSTRUCTION).** The Coolidge Bridge. Or, as one respondent put it, "The Coolidge fucking bridge!"

**WORST STREET (ALWAYS UNDER CONSTRUCTION).** Rt. 91 around Springfield.

**WORST STREET (TRAFFIC).** Route 9.

**WORST (MOST LIKELY) PLACE TO GET A SPEEDING TICKET.** Rt. 91 through Greenfield.

**WORST (MOST UNCOMFORTABLE) SEATS IN A MOVIE THEATRE.** Tie between Hampshire Six and Mountain Farms Four, both AMC Theatres. As AMC's ads say, "There is a differ-

ence." Sure is: sore ass.

### **WORST PLACE TO GO ON A FIRST DATE.**

The movies. Other responses included "Taco Bell," "My bedroom," and "Her mom's house."

**WORST PARKING.** UMass. Someone voted for their mom.

**WORST PLACE TO GO PARKING.** Downtown Northampton. Honorable mention for practicality: "The parking lot behind the police station."

**WORST PLACE TO GO DRINKING WHEN YOU'RE UNDERAGE.** The police station. (Honest.) "Your parent's kitchen" was a good one.

**WORST TOWN TO BE A TEENAGER IN.** Hatfield.

**WORST STORE TO SHOPLIFT IN.** Stop & Shop. Hardest working store dicks around.

**WORST MALL.** The Dead Mall. (Mt. Farms.)

**WORST (MOST USELESS) STORE.** All For \$1.

**WORST REST AREA (FOR REST).** Rt. 91 south, Holyoke. Fav: "The middle of the street."

**WORST REST AREA (FOR SEX).** Both Rt. 91 rest areas (north and south) in Holyoke.

**WORST VIEW.** The "scenic view" from the Rt. 91 rest area in, yup, Holyoke.

**WORST ARCHITECTURAL EYESORE.** The art kiosk on Main Street in Northampton.

**WORST CITY/TOWN PLANNING.** Hadley, with the majority of Hadley votes singling out Route 9.

**WORST CITY/TOWN WATER.** Northampton.

**WORST (MOST) POLLUTED PLACE.** Holyoke.

**WORST PLACE TO BE IF YOU'RE A NON-SMOKER.** Packard's.

**WORST PLACE TO BE IF YOU'RE A SMOKER.** The hospital.

**WORST PLACE FOR DOG-DOO.** "Under my shoe." Runners-up: "In the backyard," "In my backyard," "My house," "My lap," and "My girl-friend's prom dress."

**WORST PUBLIC PARK.** Pulaski Park, Northampton.

## **THINGS**

**WORST CARTOON CHARACTER.** The kids

from *Family Circus*.

**WORST TELEVISION CHARACTER.** Tie between Barney and Ally McBeal.

**WORST LOCAL CABLE SHOW.** Gloria T.

**WORST LOCAL WEB SITE.** "Chamber of Commerce." Which, though? Should probably be for all of 'em, though - we're still waiting to see a creative one.

**WORST BUMPER STICKER.** Mean People Suck. Our fav: My kid sold crack to your honor student.

**WORST COLLEGE MAJOR.** Business.

**WORST MEDICAL PLAN.** Kaiser.

**WORST USE OF PUBLIC FUNDS.** A tie between "Welfare" and "the Police Department."

**WORST USE OF PRIVATE FUNDS.** Bill Gates' house.

### **WORST INJUSTICE IN THIS WORLD.**

Starvation/world hunger. Runners-up include: "Big jerks who make it," "No Sunday bus service in summer," "Humans evolving," and "Pauly Shore has a career."

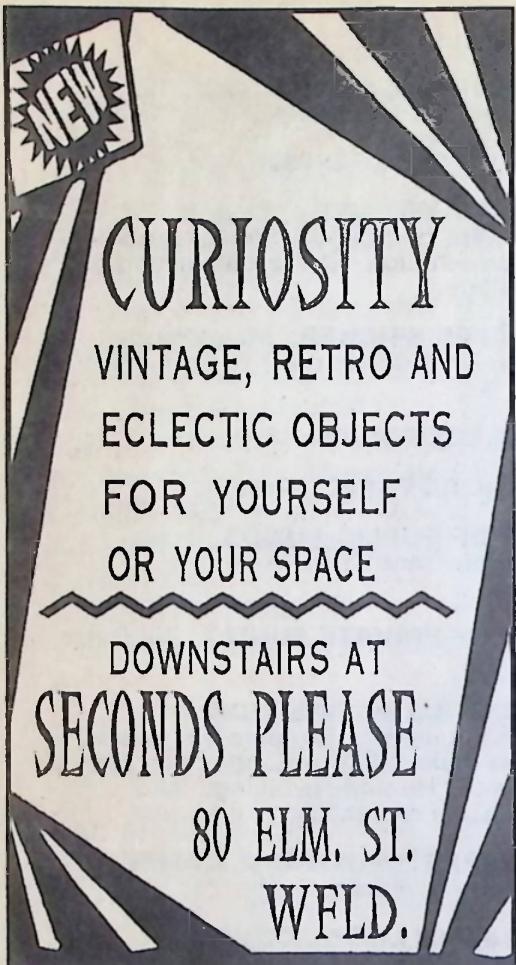
**WORST (DUMBEST) POLITICAL CAUSE.** The anti-cloning movement.

**WORST (BIGGEST) LOCAL COVER-UP.** The Holyoke police scandal. Honorable mention: "Friendly's is a late night brothel for teenagers," and "All of the City Council is gay."

**WORST SCAM.** Many responses. The winner (by one vote): "Lite" bologna. Of note: "The ones that start with 'free trial offer,'" "The Taste of Northampton," and "The prices they charge at restaurants in Northampton."

**WORST PICK-UP LINE (THAT YOU'VE ACTUALLY HEARD).** No winner. Responses include: "Are you a model?" "You're the sweetest thing since cotton candy," "Hey, c'mere!" "Want another?" "Wanna go back to my place and fuck?" "Nice shoes. Wanna fuck?" "You look nice enough to stick my tongue into," "Dude, I love your foreskin," "My name is Beavis, let's butt heads," "You're <burp> excuse me, cute," "If I asked you to marry me, would you let me drive your car?" "You have the ass of a great artist," "Is that shirt felt? Do you want it to be?" and "Wanna go to Wal-Mart for lunch?"

**WORST EXCUSE TO KEEP WAL-MART OUT.** Traffic. Of note: "We'll lose the flea market," "A lot of people will go there," and "They don't



have a good selection."

**WORST TREATMENT OF WILDLIFE (BY AN OFFICIAL AGENCY/TOWN).** Killing the beavers/Northampton.

**WORST HOLIER-THAN-THOU-ORGANIZATION.** National Public Radio. *Hmm.*

**WORST RELIGIOUS AFTER-LIFE PROMISE.** Heaven. And variations on it: "My dead dog will be there" and "Going bowling with Jesus."

**WORST NIGHTMARE.** Teenage pregnancy/violence. More personal concerns included: "Another college in this area," "Scorpions pinching my skin," "Barbie knocked on my door. Ken was trying to kill her," and "Cancer of the dick."

**WORST FASHION COMEBACK.** The clear winner: Bell-bottoms.

**WORST TREND OF THE TRENDY.** Cigars.

**WORST BEER.** Budweiser. A close second: "Warm."

**WORST COFFEE.** Again, many different responses but only one clear loser: McDonald's.

**WORST SERVICE.** Friendly's. Kinda ironic, ain't it?

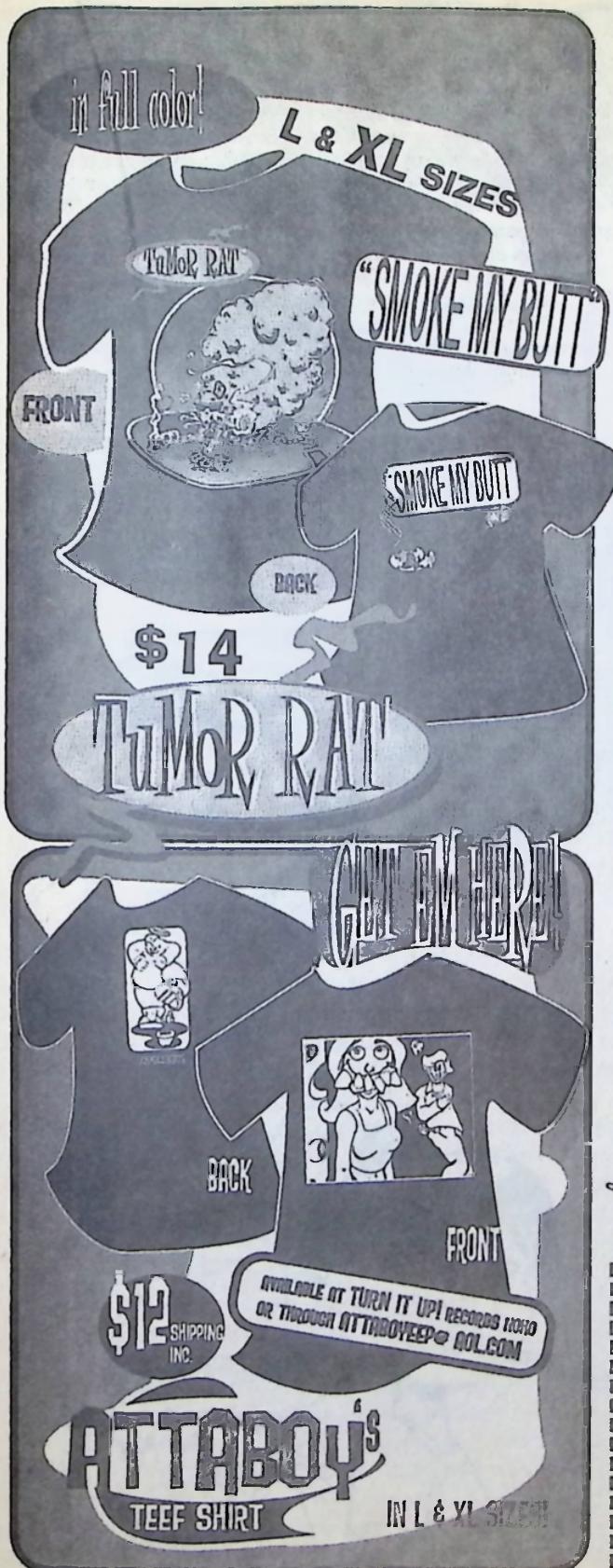
**WORST ANIMAL.** You can tell you live in the valley when the answer to this one is "Humankind." Other most hated vermin include the rat, the bat, the cat, louse, fly, earwig, mosquito and "stinking ferrets."

**WORST HAMBURGER.** McDonald's. Responses of note: "The one I make," "No such thing," and "One that is still moving."

**WORST USE OF MEAT.** "For human consumption." (This valley again.) Many runners-up: "Underwear," "Frisbee," "Art," "The girl I went out with last Thursday," "Marital aid," "NASA," and "Squeezing the fat out and drinking it."

**WORST LOCAL AWARDS.** *The Valley Advocate Best Of Awards.* (Granted, a leading question.)





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# El amante

It is my last year in this fleabitten old school and they are making me take Spanish. Why, I can't possibly imagine.

"Because you may someday have occasion to visit a foreign land," replies Miss Delmonico, our very animated instructor, who stops animating just long enough to gaze wistfully up at a large poster of a bunch of bulls chasing a bunch of guys down a narrow street. Of course, the only foreign land the guys I hang with have any threat of visiting in the immediate future is in Southeast Asia, a place not known for its Spanish. Undaunted, Delmonico insists that nothing BUT Spanish be used in the classroom from Day One and even assigns everyone a Spanish name, so there'll be no excuse whatsoever for any of us to lapse into the native tongue. Jack Inkfork is christened Juan, Paul Kredge becomes Pablo, Cathy Denson is Caterina, I should be Roberto. But Bob Bliss, the world famous nose tackle with the neck big enough to house transmissions, wrestles the only Roberto away, leaving me with Raoul, which, I am to learn, translates into Ralph. "Hey Ralphie BOY!" holler Pablo, Roberto and Juan, repeatedly finding excuses to lapse into the native tongue. At least it's a slight improvement over "Adam's Apple" or "Hamster Teeth", which is how I'm usually addressed. I approach this class, as I do most, with a comatose zeal.

But then, while watching the news through the haze of my father's cigarette smoke, I learn that Fidel Castro has a look-alike brother named Raoul. I have this thing for Fidel Castro; the cigar, the beard, the attitude, the press conferences in his pajamas. Let Bliss have his estupido Roberto, I wager, I can live with this Raoul. In fact, I shall become Raoul. I start keeping a pen perpetually clenched in my teeth, as though it were a Cuban stogie, taking it out only long enough to blow imaginary smoke rings towards Caterina or to conjugate one of Delmonico's verbs. I seem to acquire an accent when I do - part Ricardo Montalban, part Baba Looey - and even start taking on a swagger, entering the classroom or leaving it, dragging on my dark blue Bic like the second coming of Cesar Romero. I am wholly and truly Raoul.

Once, upon leaving the room and merging into the Southeast Expressway traffic of the hallway, I become acutely aware that the girls, *las chicas*, are taking serious notice of me, giggling in that way that girls do - girls that had never looked my way once. Raoul, Raoul, you are too cool, I preen, puffing out my little sunken chest, doing some sort of undulating Fernando Lamas motion with my hips, pen quivering from my teeth like a hummingbird looking for love. Wide-eyed they regard me, nudging one another as they and their intoxicating perfume pass. It is sex appeal, stark and undeniably raw. I have been reborn. I decide to risk being late for Algebra and duck into the boys' lav under the stairs by the custodian's office. I want to do something with the hair; maybe get rid of the little boy bang thing, soak it down with water (which will also make it much darker) and sweep it all back like a platform diver at the Mexico City Games. I take out my comb. I look in the mirror. And have a stroke. A long thick swath of navy blue, about three inches wide, flows out from my lower lip, down the front of my chin, over my clearly-defined adam's apple, down my throat and into

my shirt. I yank out the ruptured pen, wing it into the nearest urinal, and look again at my mouthful of blueberry pie. My teeth, my gums, my tongue, and that stalactite-ly thing underneath it: all bathed in blue, midnight blue, thicker than rubber cement. How could I not have felt it? How could I not have tasted it? How can I set foot in this godforsaken building again? This is going to lead to songs and poems and stories, rest assured. I have to wash my teeth with SOAP! My TEETH! Until they BLEED! With that vile, caustic powder that grinds out of the dispenser like Parmesan cheese. Again and again. Scrub. Rinse. Scrub. Rinse. Algebra? I'll be lucky to get this stuff off by the Huntley-Brinkley Report.

Raoul leaves me then, like a freshly-killed cartoon character with wings and a harp, taking his cigar and his attitude with him. Of course, I retain the name. "Porque, Raoul, porque?" Miss Delmonico sighs, handing back quiz after quiz.

I occasionally catch Caterina's gaze from the back of the room. She always turns away, though, giggling softly, in that way that chicas do.

Illustration  
by  
Jim  
Lawson



interesting failures in film available on video

# Guilty Pleasures

michael charles hill

**BIG WEDNESDAY**  
(1978)

**WRITTEN BY JOHN MILIUS  
& DENNIS AABERG  
DIRECTED BY JOHN MILIUS  
STARRING: JAN-MICHAEL  
VINCENT, GARY BUSEY  
& WILLIAM KATT**

"If everybody had an ocean across the USA, then everybody'd be surfin' like Cali-for-ni-a".

Thus spoke The Beach Boys.

Writer/director John Milius' (DILLINGER, THE WIND AND THE LION, FAREWELL TO THE KING) third directorial effort is a rite-of-passage/coming-of-age story that tells the tale of three young men, bonded by friendship and surfing, and of a mythic wave, known as Big Wednesday, that comes only once in a generation. But, ultimately, it is a treatise on entering manhood, in the guise of a nostalgic journey back to, and a reflection of, the 1960's.

Jan-Michael Vincent (DEFIANCE, THE MECHANIC, WHITE LINE FEVER) stars as Matt Johnson, the legend of The Point, a popular surfing spot near Malibu, in this unabashedly epic-like, modern day Greek legend. Along with William Katt (BUTCH & SUNDANCE: THE EARLY YEARS) and Gary Busey (THE BUDDY HOLLY STORY, POINT BREAK, STRAIGHT TIME) as Jack Barlow and Leroy "The Masochist" Smith, respectively, the story of their relationship with each other and of their relationship with "Bear," a former champion surfer and their mentor, who now designs/shapes boards for them.

Throughout the course of the film, Bear watches over Matt, Jack, and Leroy, dispensing words of wisdom and presaging the day when the "big" wave will come - the day that they can draw the line and distinguish themselves from other surfers and, ultimately, other men.

Told by an unseen narrator, in a series of "chapters", which are introduced by a "swell" - the benchmark of each era, he

wistfully chronicles the film's 12-year story.

Beginning in 1962, with the South Swell, Matt, Jack, and Leroy have graduated from high school and have no future plans other than partying and surfing. On a weekend trip down to Tijuana, Mexico, Matt learns that his girlfriend is pregnant and realizes that his future has been decided for him.

1965 is introduced by the North Swell, and with the war in Vietnam in full swing - a defining moment in their generation and a defining moment within the film - Matt, Jack and Leroy, receive their induction notices. And while Matt and Leroy do their damnest to avoid the draft, Jack enlists and proudly dons the uniform of the Green Berets.

Finally, in 1968, introduced by the West Swell, Jack returns from the war and rejoins the life and friends he left behind, but true to the words of Thomas Mann, he can never really go home again. It's not so much that his world has changed, but rather, his friends have changed and, ultimately, Jack has changed.

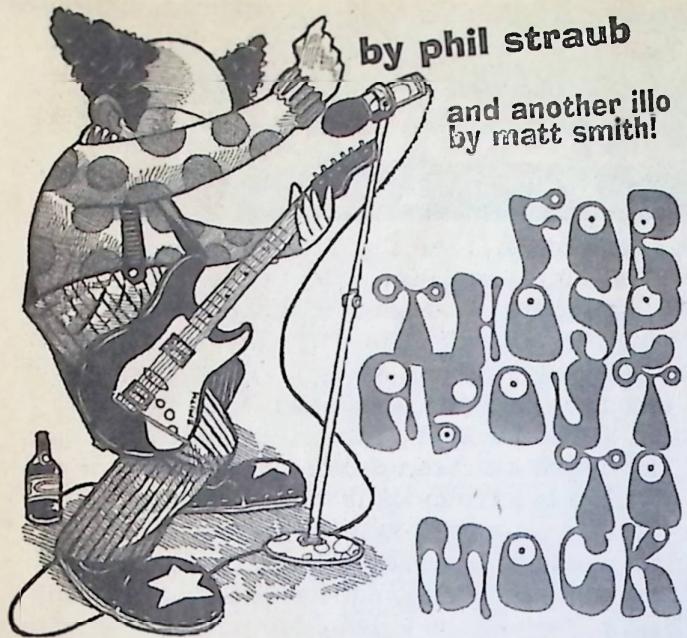
During these six years they weather personal crises and suffer through the loss of friends and the loss of their way. Matt, Jack, and Leroy meet one last time to honor the memory of their friend who died in the war — and go their separate ways.

The film ends in 1974, with the Great Swell (Big Wednesday), the wave that Bear had prophesied would be coming since 1950. And under the watchful eye of their former mentor, Matt, Jack, and Leroy reunite at The Point and fulfill their destiny.

With an equally epic-like score by Basil Poledouris, and homages to the westerns of both John Ford and Sam Peckinpah, John Milius, who has a cameo as a Tijuana barker offering to sell our heroes some "reefer," has created an accurate recreation of, and a sentimental tribute to, his own youth and to the way of the warrior.

"Catch a wave and you're sitting on top of the world."





by phil straub

and another illo  
by matt smith!

You know what we need? More song parodies. Lampooning, that's what makes this country great. Our ability... no, our desire to laugh at others. That's what sets us apart from the animals. I'm not talking about comedy, either. Who wants to sit around and listen to a comedy record? Sounds kind of reactionary, if you ask me. No, I'm talking wry humor for the sardonic set. I'm talking not quite comedy, not quite music... but for some reason it can make you hum a few bars and laugh out loud. Such is the magic of the Song Parody.

Sure, song parodies also appeal to the "comedy record set," but I bet they have more crossover potential than you might think. The music is already written, the audience is already established... all you have to do is come up with the right lyrics. Not just any lyrics, mind you. Anyone can walk down the street making up their own lyrics to songs. That doesn't mean it's funny, just sad. That's why, technically, not everyone is a comedian. You see, comedy is serious business and bad comedy is no laughing matter. However, if you're just whacky enough, you can pull this thing off without seeming to break a sweat.

Take "Weird" Al Yankovic. Please. Born the son of polka legend Frankie Yankovic, Al learned early on the joys of the accordion. Unfortunately, the accordion is not the instrument of choice in the world of rock and roll. In fact, most rock fans have a hard time taking the accordion seriously. This was to be Al's ace in the hole. His early singles, song parodies done on accordion, became regular favorites on the Dr. Demento Show. You could usually catch "My Bologna" or "Another One Rides The Bus" on any given broadcast. They led to a record contract and the chance to do videos. It was here, perhaps, that Al's true genius was unleashed. What started out as an excuse to act out his songs became an opportunity to expand the parody, lampooning not only an artist's song, but their video, as well. His parodies of Michael Jackson and Nirvana are dead on, both visually and musically. It's truly amazing that he's been able to do both so well for so long.

Quality, however, has never been a major factor in the world of song parodies. That's why "Morning Zoo"-type radio DJ's are able to churn them

out almost daily. Mad Magazine relies on the song parody so heavily that you can find one in almost every other issue. Recently, they ran a series of Star Wars parodies set to the strains of the Macarena ("Oooh, Ben Kenobi!"). The formula has even been used to extend beyond parody. Fans of fantasy-oriented media have used the format to create what they call Filk music, which means taking lyrics about hobbits, dragons and the like, and setting them to the music of popular songs. The name, so legend has it, stems from an "accidental" misspelling of "folk music" at some convention long ago.

While the song parody probably dates back to vaudeville or even the "dirty limerick," one of the biggest stars of the genre has to be Allan Sherman. Perhaps best known for "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh," Sherman managed to lampoon nearly every musical genre he could lay his hands on. His "My Son, the ..." series (Folksinger, Celebrity, Nut) led to some of his biggest hits and helped him top the charts in the early sixties. Not bad for a person whose previous claim to fame was writing for the TV game show, "What's My Line?". When the Beatles took over the charts and forever changed the course of music, it's no wonder that Sherman recorded "Pop Hates the Beatles." In reality, Allan had the last laugh. Not only is he credited with making the song parody financially viable, but he also planted in the advertising industry the concept of subtly manipulating the lyrics of a popular song into a catchy company jingle. These days, though, advertising agencies are taking their cues from trends associated with the rap industry. Rather than change the lyrics of a song to fit a certain product, they can simply sample the song directly. Aah, progress.

Stan Freberg was also known for reworking popular songs, but his interpretations weren't exactly parodies as much as they were short comic vignettes. The bit would usually revolve around what was going on in the studio at the time of the recording. His version of "Heartbreak Hotel" has an echo chamber with a life of its own, and his "Banana Boat Song" features a bongo player so hung over that he can hardly tolerate the shrill notes of the vocalist. This approach served him well, and can be heard throughout many of the skits on his mid-fifties radio show, as well as his "History of America" albums.

Even in our beloved Pioneer Valley can one find an active participant of the world of song parodies. I'm speaking, of course, of Raymond & the Circle. Raymond's contribution to the genre is certainly unusual; rather than rerecord the music, he simply dubs his vocals over those of the song in question. The result is something very special and quite addictive. For starters, check out his version of Santana's "Black Magic Woman" (known as "Black Magic Marker"), if no other reason than its inspiring magic marker solo. If you're feeling adventurous, I strongly recommend renting one of his many videos that are available at Pleasant Street Video. They can be quite an experience.

Song parodies can either be very satisfying or very annoying, depending on your sense of humor and your feelings toward the song that is being parodied. But popular music can be so serious and so bloated, that it needs parodies to show us that things do not have to be so serious. Plus, parodies are easy to create, and offer the benefit of instant recognition, which makes them easy to market. Which means that they will most likely be with us until there is no longer anything to parody... and that could be a while.

5



## LENNY KRAVITZ

### 5 (Virgin)

In a time when attention spans last about as long as the average sub-atomic particle, it can be disastrous to a career, however strong, when an artist delivers a clunker (remember how cool L7 and Babes In Toyland once were? Anyone seen copies of *Hungry For Stink* or *Nemesisters* in the dollar bin lately?).

1995's limp *Circus* was a critical and commercial flop that left Lenny appearing both rudderless and bereft of inspiration, and headed for imminent retirement. Another dud would certainly end the gravy train ride. The pressure to deliver was on.

And what he has delivered is perhaps his strongest release ever. *Lenny Kravitz 5* harkens back to the strengths of his debut, *Let Love Rule*, and takes

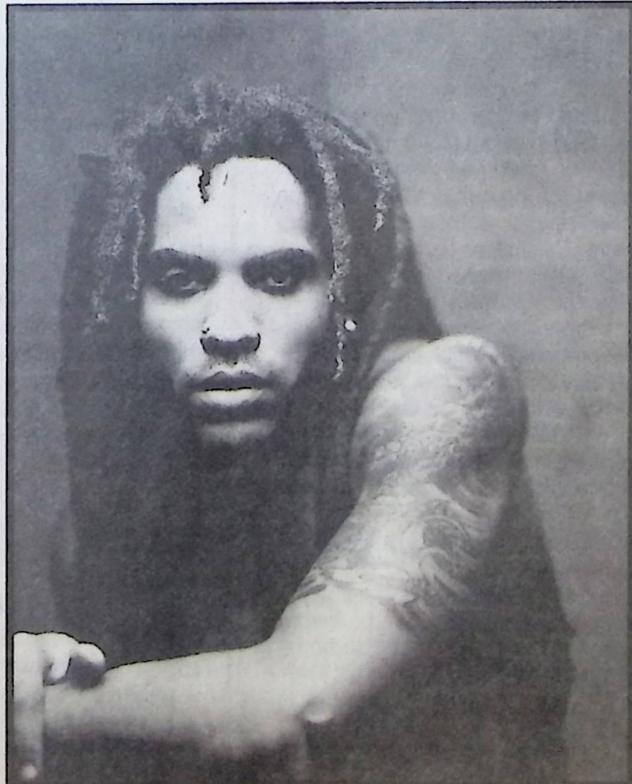
the trip even further.

Lenny serves notice immediately on the opening track, "Live." Propelled by swirling organ and pumping bass, it lurches along Funkadelic-like, a promise of a party about to crank up another notch. Harnessing the funk sound that the Ret Hot Chili Peppers made tubfulls of cash on, Lenny more carefully recreates the sounds of the seventies with a close eye towards authenticity.

His retro proclivities continue to mine the funk soul vein ("Supersoul Fighter," "I Belong to You"), recalling the glory days when Earth, Wind & Fire, Sly and the Family Stone, and Stevie Wonder ruled the airwaves (and Bootsy was just an unknown sideman).

"Black Velveteen" updates the sound a bit, with a pulsing techno/rock beat. "If You Can't Say No" is not unlike what Jimi Hendrix might be producing today if he was still alive.

Deep in potential singles, and deep in crossover rock/r&b mate-



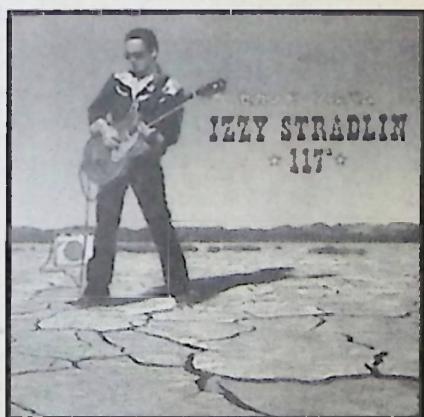
rial, success should be in Lenny's future. Most amazingly, all the instruments (save an occasional guest) are played by Lenny himself, a true solo album.

The album finishes triumphantly with "Can We Find A Reason?" a smoky afterglow, like the soundtrack to a slow cruise in a '67 convertible through Harlem on a lazy, hazy August afternoon in the early 70's, when folks were chill, platform shoes ruled and urban music still rocked.

Find it, buy it, and watch the last 25 years melt away like a sno-cone on a hot sidewalk.

- Carreck deBangs

31



### IZZY STRADLIN 117 DEGREES (Geffen)

In my opinion, the best thing to have ever happened to Izzy Stradlin was leaving Guns 'n Roses. I was never too keen on Axel anyway. I found his voice cloying, something like chewing tin foil. Izzy's music is more down to earth, more primal and he sings better too.

And his second solo record *117 Degrees* hasn't wandered from those particular qualities a bit. Former G'n'R bandmate Duff McKagan supplies some estimable basswork, punchy and solid. And drummer Taz Bently is much more than adequate. The notable difference from his first CD ...*And The Ju Ju Hounds* is the

highly lamentable absence of organist Ian McLagan, formerly of the Faces. Eddie Ashford's accomplished mandolin playing, however, helps fill the void. The overall effect sounds much like later Faces/Rolling Stones... pure rock 'n roll. Nothing to complain about there.

All the tunes rock and the lyrics are pretty good as well. The title track is catchy and Izzy's slide work is picture perfect, wildly fluctuating and searing as rock slide should be. "Here Before You" begins with an off the wall radiola effect before evolving into a countryish number. Rick Richards' guitar chops are right on the money here, and the instrumental "Grunt" finds him battling axes with Stradlin

(who also plays bass on this track). A nice and fairly original sound is the result (this is the standout track in my mind). "Freight Train" is also a good bet for significant radio airplay, as good a rocker as you're likely to hear. "Methanol" is quirky, but a heart-pounder nonetheless. The concluding track, "Surf Roach," is happily more surf than roach, though I really can't be sure. Also an instrumental, it's quite raucous, making it a perfect closer.

Well produced and executed with both verve and panache, **117 Degrees** makes the grade once again for Izzy and further develops his particular brand of classic rock 'n roll.

- Meathook Williams



### **JIMMIE VAUGHAN OUT THERE**

(Epic)

It's been four years since Jimmie's last effort, *Strange Pleasure*. Fans of that great album will be pleased by this new one, *Out There*, which generally follows in the same vein (although in my opinion not quite as "out there").

I've always felt that Jimmie's playing was more akin to that of the late Freddie King than to his younger brother Stevie Ray. Real Texas blues is the operative phrase here and this one's a barn burner! Starting off with the Nile Rogers-penned hoodoo rocker "Like A King," featuring Nile himself on rhythm guitar and tambourine, it's a pleasure from start to finish. I enjoy

the sound of Vaughan's voice far more than that of Kim Wilson from the Fabulous Thunderbirds era. "Lost In You" spotlights cocktail vibes from Larry Bunker, who shows up on "Can't Say No" as well. The title cut has Jimmie's trademark "hey yeah" reverb embellishments and swell backup singing as well. Bill Willis contributes fine B3 work on all the cuts for that essential roadhouse sound. Nothing else could substitute itself and it works out well for the basslines too. No bass guitar is heard throughout the disc. Roomfull Of Blues tenor sax man Greg Piccalo logs in for the honky tonk "The Ironic Twist" and Dr. John is on hand for "Astral Projection Blues" (yikes!) playing both piano and vibes. (That track was recorded in the Big Easy for proper ambiance - all the others in Memphis.) "Positively Meant To Be" has a nice gospel feel to it, and "Motorhead Baby" is in 50's R&B style. Drummer George Rains holds it all together with solid precision. And topping it all off is "Little Son, Big Sun," a delta style boogie with Jimmie playing solo acoustic guitar, beautifully.

It's hard to imagine a recording by this veteran bluesman being anything less than top-notch and that is the case with *Out There*. Hopefully, the wait will not be as long for Vaughan's next outing.

- Meathook Williams



### **VERSUS TWO CENTS PLUS TAX**

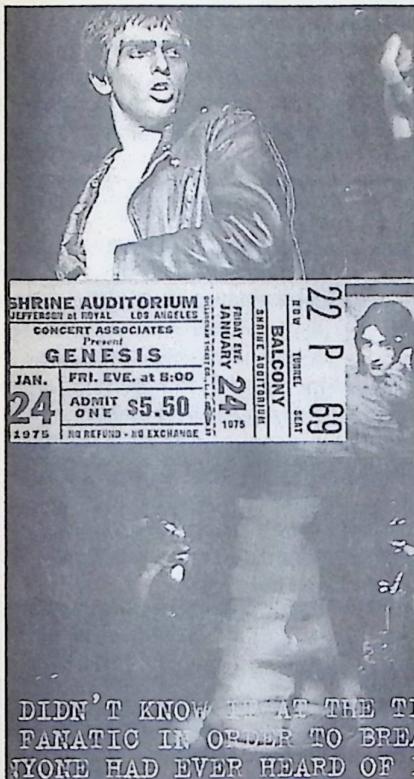
(Caroline)

What's up with this band? They've been around for about six years, put out at least three records and countless singles... so why hasn't their sound changed? How can they be so damned consistent? Sure, the production is cleaner, the playing is more polished... but the basic layout of "Atomic Kid," for instance, is roughly similar to "Tin Foil Star," their first single from lo those many years ago. Fast paced, slightly distorted, angst ridden pop for the alternative set. They pack some power, some real potency in their hooks, but they can't seem to capitalize on that. There are some great bits on this record, but they get lost in the overall package. "Atomic Kid" and "Dumb Fun" both seem to be classic Versus and the record, as a whole, seems to reach a nice pleasant groove. That's great if you're looking for a "guilty pleasure," or an easy alternative background CD with nothing concrete on it to really latch onto.

I just wish they were still doing singles, putting all of their energy into a single song, instead of watering it down so that they can spread it out over an entire record.

- Phil Straub

## GENESIS ARCHIVE 1967-75 (Atlantic)



DIDN'T KNOW WHAT THE T  
FANATIC IN ORDER TO BRE  
NYONE HAD EVER HEARD OF

The fact that the mention of the word 'Genesis' brings to mind for most people a balding troll lip-synching something that they remember as a Michelob commercial is one of music's most unfair legacies.

Aah, for it is a little known fact that during a small time in the seventies, Genesis stood for something much more. Under the tutelage of Peter Gabriel, Genesis (Gabriel, Mike Rutherford, Steve Hackett, Tony Banks and Phil Collins) developed from a precious aggregation of upper-class high school kids. Underage 12-string-toting, lip-spouting fops that became an efficient group of high magicians: mystics able to summon the ancient ones from their millennial slumbers through the thunder of bass pedals, mellotrons, serpent-like guitar and incantations. More importantly, they exhibited a devotion to their craft that is a lost science in current times.

Developing in a time when popular music was exploding in new

directions that covered all points of the compass: King Crimson, Yes, Henry Cow, Pink Floyd, Soft Machine all found success during the toddler years of Genesis in the UK. This coincided with a global explosion of experimentation: Can, Faust, Tangerine Dream, Kraftwerk (Germany); Magma, Gong (France); Focus (Holland); PMF, Area, Goblin (Italy) and Aphrodite's Child (Greece) - launch pad for the then-subversive but now docile New Age maven Vangelis - all helped push rock's limits quantum leaps beyond Chuck Berry and Elvis.

This fertile breeding ground is documented well on *Archive*. Able to draw upon their extensive literate backgrounds, Genesis was an intellectual concept that eventually fine-tuned itself enough to catch up with the stoners. Genesis' decidedly prissy formulative phase comprises most of disc four of this 4 CD set. Mainly encompassing the pre and post *From Genesis to Revelation* school-age debut, many songs (both in alternate take and demo form), now stripped of unnecessary saccharine string embellishment, reveal a Tolkien-esque angst that hints at what they are capable of, but improve upon the muzak sheen the original release was saddled with. Also contained on the fourth disc are some interesting pre-*Trespass* sessions that have never appeared before, hinting at the developing magic to come.

This magic is mostly contained on disc three, a compendium of their heavyweight material that draws on their peak period of creativity. Disregarding some omissions ("The Knife"), all of their showstoppers are here. "Dancing With the Moonlit Knight," "Firth of Fifth," and "More Fool Me" (featuring a then-rare vocal from Phil Collins) showcase the virtuosity the band attained on 1973's *Selling England by the Pound*. Lightning-like tempo changes are intertwined with sinuous guitar lines as an underpinning for Gabriel's bizarre lyrical visions. Centerpiece, "Supper's Ready," an apocalyptic musical excursion that all band members seem to agree is their finest achievement, draws the listener in to the full array of Genesis' strengths. The tight journey that one is drawn

into will defy the listener to believe that the song is over 25 minutes in length.

Other obscurities include "Twilight Alehouse" and "Happy the Man" (previously unreleased *Fox Trot*-era songs), two of the few unobtainable songs that only existed in 7" format during the 70's.

Discs one and two are a complete live version of 1975's rock opera *The Lamb Lies Down on Broadway*. Once a well-known LP, *The Lamb* has slipped into the pages of obscurity. It's equally obscure storyline was the repository for many strong musical themes but was also the sign post for the dissolution of the tight musical partnership that had warped the portals of time and reality for five years. Gabriel's departure following the end of the *Lamb* tour signaled the end of an era (and at the same time the suspected demise of the band itself - who was gonna sing, Phil?).

Pop band to the point of nausea in the 80's (let's not forget Mike and the Mechanics, kids!), and art rock band of obscurity in the 70's, Genesis was imperceptibly influential upon many - and this release will be a welcome addition to the collection of those who remember that once, it's true, there were giants in those days.

- Carreck deBangs

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**PAPA WEMBA**  
**MOLOKAI**  
 (Real World)

Here's an unrelentingly delightful piece of afropop from the Democratic Republic of Congo (formerly Zaire, and the Belgian Congo before that) — megastar Papa Wemba.

Wemba has been a major proponent of soukous music for close to 20 years. What, you may ask, is soukous? During the fifties and sixties the rage in sub-Saharan Africa was the rhumba imported from Cuba and elsewhere in the American tropics. Of course, rhumba, son, and other Latin music forms were hugely influenced by the earlier African rhythms carried to our hemisphere in the bondage that was slavery. Eventually, these hybrid sounds made their way back to Mother Africa. Throughout the sixties, seventies and eighties, horns were

slowly replaced with guitars (though horns are still often used as well) and African rhumba evolved into soukous.

The former French-speaking colonies have set the pace for this most infectious music genre and much of modern soukous is produced in Paris. Several excellent, farsighted record labels have helped to popularize this and other ethnic forms of music in the States in recent years. In Papa Wemba's case, it's Peter Gabriel's Real World who gets the credit.

Since his first release on Real World several years ago, Wemba's music has evolved somewhat beyond soukous, but it's impossible to not recognize the Latin American underpinnings and the trademark ultrasweet vocals. Lyrics are mostly in either French or Lingala, as it is in the bulk of soukous.

*Molokai*, the disc's title, refers to the island in Hawaii where Catholic missionary Father Damien ministered to the leper colony there in the eighteen seventies and eighties. Papa Wemba saw a film biography of Father Damien in his childhood and this recording is testament to the effect the film had on him. The result is beautiful, with Wemba in top form and virtuoso playing and production. Like much of the music coming out of Francophone Africa, synthesizers are almost omnipresent, but always used with impeccable taste and are generally quite imitative of their acoustic forebears. The background vocals

are absolutely lush. The topics are serious, but the overall feeling is almost joyful. The album ends with the international superhit "Esclave" (Slave). A trusted, but constantly evolving talent, Papa Wemba is on the rise in these parts.

Virtually every record shop in the area stocks his discs. Check him out.

- Meathook Williams

**AFRICA  
 FÊTE 98**

(Look Park / July 13)

It took 'til midway into the third act for the rain gods to be appeased, but even they had to give way to the enormous warmth of Africa Fête 98. It also took a while for the crowd to swell to size. But from anemic beginnings the numbers steadily grew and I'm sure none was disappointed with the show.

Under makeshift shelters of tarps and umbrellas the crowd was first treated to a performance of the rising star Maryam Mursal and her all-Danish band clad in ankle length white robes. The Somali expatriate Mursal makes her home in Denmark these days. The band was tight and soulful and Maryam poured her soul out with songs mainly about the plight of her homeland. Unfurling her nation's flag and sometimes imploring in broken English, she gyrated through about eight or so torrid numbers. Great though she and her band were, however, the absence of a real horn section was noticed. Big bands are prohibitive on a world tour, and the woman on keyboards did a creditable job with her Roland synthesiser.

Next up to the plate was Senegal's Cheikh Lô. Lô is an original with his acoustic guitar, something of a troubador. His album is produced by superstar Youssou N'Dour, but his material is far more visceral. It's something like Youssou's early work with Etoile De Dakar, but even more spare and featuring Lô's deeper



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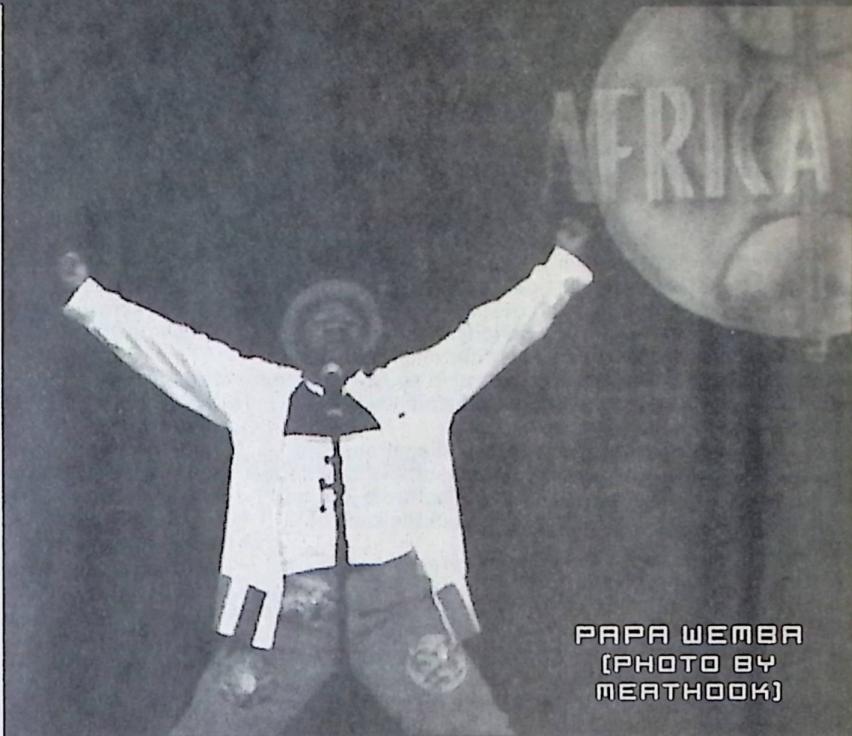
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voice. Another bonus shared by the two is the ever excellent Assane Thiam on tama (talking drum). In fact, overall, the band is one of the hottest on the African scene today. Cheikh Lô is going places... stay tuned.

The third act was Papa Wemba, a true megastar and pioneer of Soukous and African rhumba, having blazed a unique trail with Zaiko Langa and afterwards with Klan Langa. Resplendent in his highly original red and white clothing (including the best hat I've seen in ages), he captivated the audience with his sweet vocals. His band was also non-pareil and featured Patrick Beybey (son of the great Cameroonian legend Francis Beybey) on keyboards. The interplay between the two was truly inspirational. Backup singers Awa Maiga and Isabel Gonzalez were lovely in both appearance and in voice. And Djembe wizard Moussa Sissokho held the crowd in his thrall



PAPA WEMBA  
(PHOTO BY  
MEATHOOK)

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"...full of personal stories and poems which are non-censored thought (something we believe strongly about)."  
-Persephone & Violet

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as he prowled the stage. Wemba is always a joy, whether with this, his international touring band, or with his other, the more African oriented Viva La Musica.

The finale brought forth Salif Keita, the albino "Mansa of Mali". Though from a noble family, the incipient birth of an albino (a sign of bad luck in his culture) and his career as singer alienated him from his family. But his work in the government sponsored Rail Band made him known and loved the world over. It's also where he met

guitarist Kante Manfila, with whom he left the Rail Band to join Les Ambassadeurs, Mali's classic modern group. In impeccable form for this concert, Keita and band showed their more urban side with tough, gritty rhythms and mesmerizing vocal work.

MC'ed by local African music maven and WFCR personality Kari Ngiiri, this was a thoroughly enjoyable concert in spite of the weather and I can barely wait 'til next year.

- Meathook Williams

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Q: If Bill Clinton is the Commander in Chief of the armed services, shouldn't he be subject to the same rules and regulations as any other member of the service? Also, why can't he be charged for sexual harassment like any other employer?

- W.G., Greenfield

A: The simple answer to your question is, no. Although the President of the United States is the head of all the armed services he is still a civilian and therefore not subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice.

The United States has a long tradition of civilian control of the military which has lead to situations both good and bad. On the good side, civilian control has helped to prevent the problem of military takeovers that are so common in most other nations in the western hemisphere. On the bad side, pork barreling and cronyism by civilian politicians has resulted in some very inappropriate people being posted to and advanced in the military.

As to the sexual harassment allegations, the judge in the Paula Jones case found insufficient evidence of harassment to even bring the case before a jury and no harassment has even been alleged in the case of Monica Lewinsky.

If we look dispassionately at the allegations in the Jones case what we find is that even if her claims are true, and I cannot say that they are, what happened is that a man asked a woman for sex, which is a perfectly legal act, she said no and that was the end of it. There was no evidence that her refusal resulted in any action being taken against her or that her personal or professional life suffered in any way because of the alleged encounter.

Also we should note that Jones never worked for Clinton directly although she like thousands of others did work for the state of which he was the governor.

In the so-called Lewinsky case the worse thing that has been alleged is consensual sexual acts by two adults in the Oval Office. Now while we can discuss the propriety of sex on the job, and workplace ethics, it is certainly not illegal to have sex in the White House. It is crass perhaps, but not illegal.

Q: Who started the Vietnam War?  
- B.H., Hatfield

A: Well the first question I would have to ask is, "Which Vietnam War?"

As Americans we tend to think of the South East Asian conflict as being the one that raged from the late 1950's until the early 1970's, but the tiny nation of Vietnam had a long history of conflicts before that.

Even if we ignore the fact that the Chinese have



invaded Vietnam on average once every century for the last 2,000 years we are still left with dozens of invasions by Muslims, the Portuguese, the Dutch and the French.

The conflict that we are most familiar with was largely the fault of the French. The first French invaders of Vietnam, in the 1700's, took a great beating by local troops initially, but ultimately resulted in a French toe-hold in southeast Asia. Later expansions of the French Empire left them with total hegemony in the country, but facing considerable internal opposition.

Around the time of the Great War (WWI) the opposition to French rule centered around a young scholar named Nguyen That Thanh who would later become much better known as Ho Chi Minh (He Who Enlightens).

Ho began his political career as a relative moderate and even addressed his concerns about Vietnamese freedom to the Versailles Peace Conference in 1919 asking not for independence from France, but for social and political equality. The French paid him no heed and despite the occasional reduction of oppression, such as during the Popular Front government in France in 1936, colonial repression was quite brutal.

The fascist defeat of the French government in 1940 greatly weakened colonial power in Indochina, but it was the Japanese annihilation of the French administrators in Vietnam in 1945 that really allowed the development of an independent Vietnamese state.

It is a little known fact that during the end game of the second world war Ho and his followers were allies of the United States and actually worked for the Office of Strategic Services, which was the precursor of the CIA.

At the end of the war the OSS encouraged the U.S. government to support an independent Vietnam and help keep the French out of Indochina, but the desire to get the French to join an alliance against European communism became an overriding concern and the French price for supporting a western alliance was the return of their empire.

After WWII the French again tried to exert power in southeast Asia, but ran into considerable opposition. They were finally defeated in detail at a place called Dein Bien Phu on May 7, 1954.

Following the French defeat the U.S. joined with anti-Communist forces in South Vietnam and abrogated the agreement to hold elections that might have reunified the country and created a de facto nation in the south.

The indefinite postponement of the planned national elections gave communist extremists in the north all of the impetus they needed to begin introducing agents into the south and fomenting rebellion there. Thus began what is for us the most familiar Vietnamese War.

We should also note that soon after the Americans were driven out of southeast Asia the Vietnamese began their own experiment in foreign adventurism by invading Cambodia.

An advertisement for Troubadour Books. It features the text "TROUBADOUR BOOKS" in large, stylized letters. Below the text are two small illustrations of figures, one on the left holding a sword and one on the right holding a book. The text "Are you lost? Are you alienated? Are you hopeless? Then Troubadour Books may be perfect for you! Featuring quality scholarly books and lots of weird stuff and sleazy paperbacks." is written in a smaller font. At the bottom, the text "5 minutes north of Northampton on Routes 5 &amp; 10 (413) 247-3028" is provided.

# BIG BITCH

ASK  
A

Summer is here, and it's Big Bitch's favorite time of year! Time for tiny halter tops, revealing cutoffs, nude sunbathing and, of course — fucking al fresco! BB likes nothing better than to feel the summer sun warming her incredibly shapely ass as she sports herself upon the greensward with assorted friends, lovers, and slaves.

Best of all, Big Bitch is here to answer your questions on life, love, sex, celebrity gossip, or just about her own fabulous person! So submit (your questions) to Big Bitch, c/o VMag, P.O. Box 774, Northampton, MA 01061, or via e-mail to "vcromag@aol.com". Don't be shy! Big Bitch won't bite (unless you want her to, in which case it's \$200 an hour.)

Dear Big Bitch,

I am a woman in my early twenties and have been having sex since I was 16. I've never had any trouble, but my new boyfriend is a real problem. He is extremely well-endowed and even though we've tried all sorts of lubrication, it still hurts when we have sex. Can you help us?

Sore in Sunderland

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*"Discipline's  
my middle  
name, and  
nobody comes  
back the same  
from Bitch  
School."*

Dear Sore,  
How terrible for you! I'm sure the problem must be with his technique. As my dear departed granny used to say, "If you're gonna try to stuff a watermelon into a peapod, you best know what you're doin'!" I think I can help, but to get a firm grasp on the problem, I really need to examine him personally before dispensing advice. Please have him call me c/o VMag to make an appointment for a consultation. It may take a while, so don't wait up.

Dear Big Bitch,

Just wondering if you have a cure for those altogether unsightly and annoying (not to mention painful!) bumps one gets when shaving one's nether regions. I would hate to think I might have to be hairy... Smooth skin is just so much yummier, don't you think?

Yours,  
Itchy in Amherst

Itchy, Darling,  
Well, I can't answer for everyone, but I do prefer nectarines to peaches. For a

velvety vulva, Big Bitch recommends a Gillette Sensor razor with aloe strip and aloe shaving cream. Start out shaving with the grain, but after you've gained confidence, go against the grain (always a good idea anyway!) for that extra-close shave. And be sure to stop by and show Big Bitch the results!

Dear Big Bitch,

What's Leo DiCaprio really like? Didn't you just want to die when he slipped under the waves? How many times have you seen the movie?

Ashley  
The Mall  
Hadley

Dearest Ash,  
What's Leo really like? BOYS! And lots of them! The most spectacular special effects in the whole movie were lusty Leo's love scenes with Kate Winslet. He actually played them with Matthew Broderick and the computer wizards added Kate later! Sorry to sink your ship.

Confidential to Michael: It is perfectly natural to be sexually aroused contemplating the person of Big Bitch. You have no cause to feel guilty. Although I do not require your services at this time (it's all I can do to keep on top of my current slaves) I may call upon you in the future.

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JESSICA  
FALLER-  
BERGER  
R.N.

- \*Nearly 50 percent of young American children live in poverty
- \*Between 1975 and 1994, the young child poverty rate increased by 39 percent
- \*This rate grew nearly twice as fast in the suburbs (59%) as it did in the cities (34%)
- \*Most poor children live in working families (Columbia University, 1994)

## SKYROCKETING POVERTY RATES FOR AMERICAN CHILDREN

If you are a kid who goes hungry, this article is written for you. If you are an adult who cares for hungry children, read on. A list of local Food Pantries and Free Food Programs follows as a resource for one and all.

Disciplinary problems go hand in hand with hunger. Instead of labeling children with epithets such as Attention Deficit-Hyperactivity Disorder or Intermittent Explosive Disorder, think about Maslow's Hierarchy. Would you care about Euclidean Geometry if you were starving? If your mom was on crack, would you be enthralled by a dangling participle? Could you memorize the Gettysburg Address the day after your brother took a bullet to the chest?

Being dramatic am I? These scenes typify a day in the life of America's child. Seventy-two percent of inner city children know someone who was shot or murdered (Whaley & Wong, 1995). Likewise, 52% of 4th-6th graders in California fear getting stabbed. The ability to excell scholastically is negatively affected by hunger, violence, and poverty. Plagued by flashbacks, nightmares, Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, and a fatalistic orientation to the future, today's youth have far more to contend with in school than their curriculum (Ibid).

According to Emily Katz, a Hampshire College graduate who chairs the Campaign to End Childhood Hunger in Sacramento, California, "It is well proven in academia that children who eat breakfast have less disciplinary problems, less tardiness, less absenteeism, and higher test scores than do their hungry counterparts." Likewise, a trip to the cafeteria calms a *hungry* 'trouble-maker' more effectively than a trip to the principal's office. Children from households experiencing regular food shortages suffer long-term developmental and disciplinary problems, Katz emphasizes.

A child's high energy requirements for growth and development redouble the importance of proper nutrition. Think about a child who misses dinner and breakfast. By midmorning, the child is almost unable to function. A teacher rebukes the malnourished student, head-down on the desk, 'daydreaming again!' The famished, ill-tempered child gets a 'time-out!' Imagine this happening systematically, especially during the last week of every month when the paycheck, subsidy or food stamps run out. Are we going to punish kids for being hungry? Hunger-related disciplinary problems cause unnecessary stress for children and their families. Likewise, a few of the medical problems associated with

childhood malnutrition include failure to thrive, diminished IQ, diarrhea, kwashiorkor, marasmus, blindness, rachitic rosary, and even death (Whaley & Wong, 1995). Hunger amongst immigrant families and their children is especially rampant. Tragically, welfare reform sacrifices the American child for budgetary revenue.

The saddest aspect of this particular blight, Katz stresses, is how easily solvable it is with the School Breakfast Program, School Lunch Program and Summer Food Service program. But there is good news. Despite devastating welfare reforms, Congress has included funds in this year's budget to significantly bolster front-line programs against childhood hunger. Unfortunately, many schools still don't offer these government-funded meals to hungry children. After interviewing school administrators, Katz learned that schools face barriers to implementing these programs. But, Katz explains, none of these hurdles are insurmountable. Firstly, administrators view the start-up expenses associated with the Breakfast Program as cost prohibitive. Secondly, in rural areas where students face long bus commutes to school, current bus schedules prevent attendance at school breakfast. Thirdly, some schools do not offer the Free Breakfast Program to hungry children because "We'll need more cafeteria monitors."

Bureaucracy looms as the final obstacle to implementing the School Breakfast Program. It costs as much in labor to prepare 10 breakfasts as it does to prepare 50. But because our government reimburses schools according to the number of children being fed, schools must feed a certain 'quota' in order to make the program sustainable. School administrators plea, "We tried the breakfast program, but only 10 kids came." We need advocates in the local community to encourage more kids to use the Breakfast Program. The Breakfast Program isn't just for poor families either. In many households, children get themselves ready for school. Things can get so rushed that there is no time to prepare an adequate breakfast. So the Breakfast Program is not strictly an income issue.

School committees can oversee changes that would facilitate implementation of the Breakfast program. For instance, to surmount scheduling problems around bussing, breakfast can be served on the bus itself. Alternately, a breakfast period can be worked into the school-day just like a lunch period. Volunteers across the Pioneer Valley are eager to help feed hungry people. Certainly School Committees can work with programs such as Next Step Collaborative to find Volunteer Cafeteria Monitors. There is not a single challenge facing the Breakfast Program that can not be conquered with a little ingenuity.

**With one half of all children living below the poverty level, Food Subsidy Programs are critical.** Our children's health and our nation's future rely upon proper nutrition. Disciplinary problems vanish when perpetually hungry children are fed. It is unjust to idly watch as community children suffer the physical, intellectual, and psychological torments which accompany hunger. By ensuring utilization of the School Breakfast Program, we will increase literacy rates, improve attendance, bolster enthusiasm, and avoid illnesses associated with malnutrition. And that's a big load off of everyone's stress.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
PROGRAMS TO END HUNGER  
CALL OR WRITE:**

**WIC (Women, Infants, and Children  
Nutrition Program)**  
Hampshire County 413-584-3591  
Holyoke/Chicopee 413-593-8800  
Franklin/No.Quabbin 413-773-3421

**Summer Food Service Program**  
a hot meal, free for anyone aged 0-18  
Franklin County -  
First Call for Help 1-800-370-0940  
Hampden County -  
First Call for Help 413-737-2712

**First Call For Help**  
making referrals for food and other  
services  
413-256-0121

*(please call ahead to inquire about  
restrictions and schedule changes):*

**FRANKLIN COUNTY COMMUNITY  
MEALS & PANTRIES**

**Holy Trinity Church**  
133 Main Street, Greenfield  
413-774-2884  
hot meal on Thursday, 5:30

**Franklin County Community Meals**  
**Second Congregational Church**  
16 Court Square, Greenfield  
413-774-4355  
services offered Tues and Wed, 5:30

**Franklin County Community Meals**  
**St. Mary's Hall**  
90 Seventh St., Turners Falls  
413-772-1033  
Mon 5:30

**Salvation Army**  
72 Chapman St., Greenfield  
413-773-3154  
Wed, Thu, Fri, 11:30am-12:30

**West County Community Meals**  
**Trinity Church**  
Severance St., Shelburne Falls  
413-625-9009  
Friday at 5pm

**Hilltown Churches**  
St. John's Corner, 649 Main St.,  
Ashfield / 413-628-4523  
alternate Mondays;  
call for scheduling  
and emergency services

**Franklin County Area Survival Ctr.**  
96 Fourth St., Turners Falls  
413-863-9549  
Mon-Fri 10am-1:30;  
USDA Food Distribution

**HAMPDEN COUNTY  
COMMUNITY MEALS  
& PANTRIES**

**Margaret's Pantry**  
56 Cabot St., Holyoke  
413-534-7610  
services: Mon-Fri agency referral  
required, call 9am-noon, pick up same  
day by appointment; USDA Food

Distrib., for referral 413-256-0121

**Kate's Kitchen**  
264 Elm St., Holyoke  
413-532-0233  
services daily, 12:00

**Salvation Army Citadel**  
271 Appleton St., Holyoke  
413-532-6312  
Mon-Fri: Food Pantry & Bread distrib.,  
9am-noon, hot meals 3:30-4:30;  
USDA Food Distribution

**Friends Place**  
St. John's Congregational Church  
643 Union St., Springfield  
413-734-2283  
Wednesday, 5-6pm

**Greater Love Church**  
65 Newland St., Springfield  
413-782-3342  
last Sat. of the month, 10am-noon

**Martin Luther King Jr. Community  
Center**  
3 Rutland St., Springfield  
413-746-4254  
Fri 10am-11am USDA Food distrib.

**Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen**  
287 State St., Springfield  
413-731-5668  
daily noon and 5pm

**Springfield Rescue Mission**  
19 Bliss St., Springfield  
413-732-0808  
Monday-Saturday, 7:30-5pm

**Open Pantry**  
**Old First Church**  
Court Square, Springfield  
413-757-5353  
services: 9am-3pm Mon, Tue, Thur,  
Fri; agency referral required,  
call 413-256-0121

**West Springfield/Agawan Open  
Pantry**  
1023 Main St., W. Springfield  
413-734-7969  
services: Mon-Fri 9:30-10:00;  
11:30am-12:30pm, Wed 5-6pm

**Lord's Pantry**  
**First Central Baptist Church**  
50 Broadway, Chicopee  
413-592-5353  
Tuesday 9:11:30

**Emergency Food and Fuel**  
**Valley Opportunity Council**  
36 Center St., Chicopee  
413-592-6121

**Emergency Food Pantry**  
7 Free St., Westfield  
413-572-0802  
Mon-Fri, 10am-noon

**HAMPSHIRE COUNTY  
COMMUNITY MEALS  
& PANTRIES**

**Provisions Pantry**  
**Dwight Chapel**  
885 Federal St., Belchertown

413-256-8059  
services by appointment

**Amherst Survival Center**  
1200 North Pleasant St., North  
Amherst School, No. Amherst  
413-549-3968  
services: Mon, Tues, Fri 11am-3pm;  
Thu 11am-7pm  
11am - free to all - get a bag and fill it  
with dairy, produce and perishables  
12am-1pm - sit down hot lunch  
All day during open hours - Emergency  
Food Pantry - a box of dried, canned,  
or frozen foods (the only service  
requiring paper work)

**Not Bread Alone Soup Kitchen**  
14 Boltwood Ave., Amherst  
413-256-3586  
Saturday and Sunday, noon -2pm

**Food Pantry**  
**First Baptist Church**,  
434 N. Pleasant St., Amherst  
413-549-3596  
Wed 3:30-5pm

**Northampton Survival Center**  
265 Prospect St. Northampton  
413-586-6564  
Mon, Wed, Fri 11am-2pm; Tues, Thu  
4-7: USDA food distribution

**Manna**  
**Edwards Church**,  
297 Main St., Northampton  
413-584-5500  
Mon & Wed 6-7pm;  
Sat 11:30am-12:30pm

**Manna**  
**St. John's Episcopal Church**  
48 Elm St., Northampton  
413-584-1757  
Sun 11:30am-12:30pm

**Calvary Baptist Church**  
413 Main Street, Easthampton  
413-527-6252  
by appointment

**Community Care**  
**Easthampton Communitiy Center**  
12 Clark Street, Easthampton  
413-527-5240  
USDA food distribution on the first  
Monday of the month,  
10am-12noon and 6-7 pm

**Gateway Food Pantry**  
**Hampshire County Action  
Commission**  
9 Russell Rd., Huntington  
413-627-3122  
Tues: 10am-6pm; Thurs 4-8pm,  
home delivery available,  
USDA food distribution

**Pioneer Valley Assembly of God**  
63 Old Chester Rd, Huntington  
413-667-3196  
by appointment

*(Much thanks to Emily Katz for her tireless  
commitment to hungry children, and to  
Dan Berger for his inspiration.)*

# an unauthorized guide to

We're talking today with two people who are gonna give us an armchair tour of Amherst. Our first guide is Roscoe (who used to do the now-defunct Street Smarts column), a professional who works in downtown Amherst, but lives in Northampton. Accompanying Roscoe is Lulu, an undergraduate sculpture major at UMass. She lives "outside of Amherst."

Editor: All right you two, give us your overall impressions of Amherst.

Roscoe: Amherst has a lot of potential, but it doesn't quite gel. There are a lot of cool things about the town, but it isn't a place that I spend a whole lot of time in, other than when I'm working.

Lulu: I love it for the sheer fact that it has the best Salvation Army Thrift Store in the area. Otherwise... it's very quaint-like but needs more action.

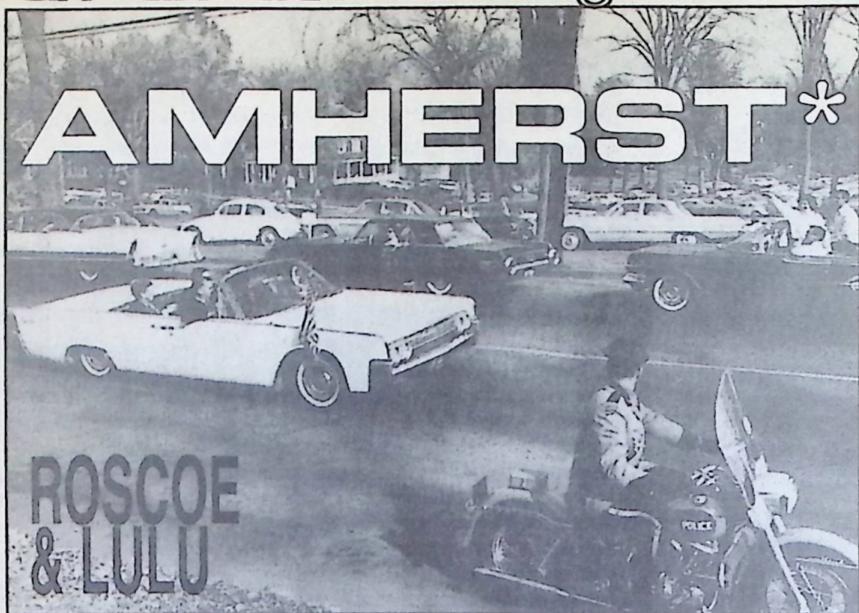
E: Like what?

L: Given that it has great restaurants for my income bracket as well as the fancy ones, I'm sometimes at a loss as to what to do after dinner.

R: Yeah, for a town that has three colleges in it, there is very little nightlife. For instance, there is no place to see live music, except for the Black Sheep, which mostly plays Folk music, which is fine.

E: Okay, okay, let's go back to restaurants, which seem to be a real plus for this town. Can you give us more details?

L: Cheap eats abound! The hot spots are Bueno Y Sano, where you can get a nutritious filling taco for a buck, or a big ass burrito for under five bucks. On the same note, there is La Veracruzana,



L: Books and music, mmm... yummy!

R: Well, one of the best used bookstores in the Valley is Valley Books. They have everything, including recent releases at very cheap prices. I also think Atticus Albion Bookshop is a great all-around book store, both new and used. Then there is always the Jeffery Amherst, for the truly intellectual.

L: I like to peruse the big magazine

selection, including many art periodicals at Hastings Stationery. And for a bigger, wackier selection, go to Amherst Newsroom. Besides that Amherst has a great public library, the Jones.

R: Of course, there are three colleges with big libraries filled with lots of books.

L: I knew that!

R: For music, there is For The Record, which has a great selection of all different types of music, a great music lover's store. Mystery Train is a funky place for used CD's and LP's and other cool shit.

L: Then there is always Newbury Comics, if you like your music with an attitude.

E: As a segue to the next topic, do you consider yourselves art savvy?

R: Yes.

L: Uh-huh.

E: Then what about the art scene in Amherst?

R: Huh?

L: Not many people are aware of this, but there is a vibrant art community in

\*Yes, that's President Kennedy's motorcade making its way past Amherst Common en route to ground-breaking ceremonies at Amherst College's Robert Frost Library. The date: October 26, 1963, shortly before his assassination in Dallas.

Amherst, at our very own, distinguished three colleges. There are many galleries, as well as the Mead Art Museum, with its large permanent collection at Amherst College. In fact, right now, one of the galleries at UMass is showing my thesis, titled "Voluptuous Nothing: the blank canvas."

R: There are also a couple of in-town art galleries, like the R. Michelson Gallery, which is upscale and features famous local artists. Then there is The Fridge, a new cooperative gallery. It features funky eclectic collections from local up and comers.

E: So, now I've had a good meal, I've picked up a new book and a CD, and I've checked out the art scene. Where can I go to be entertained?

L: I'm a real movie buff and if I've missed the bus to the mall or Northampton, I can always catch a flick at Amherst Cinema, which always runs movies after they've run at the big theaters. For good stick (pool for all you novices), I head over to Michael's Billiards. At the end of a long day of classes I have two choices: Go stretch my body, brain, and soul at the New England Center for Yoga and Healing, or join some friends at The Amherst Brewing Company for good local brew. Other than that I sleep.

R: I like to unwind, or sometimes wind up, if there's a good game on television at Rafter's Sports Bar. For music, occasionally there is a big concert at the Mullins Center at UMass, or Amherst College offers a series of smaller shows, as does UMass in the Campus Center. For theatre, dance or multi-cultural performances, there is the UMass Fine Art Center Series. Other than that, like I said, Amherst needs a music scene, pronto!

E: The out-skirts of Amherst seems to be full of beautiful natural scenery. There must be a lot of outdoor recreation.

R: I like to take a cool refreshing dip at Puffer's Pond when it's hot. There a lot of great hiking trails, such as the Robert Frost Trail and

Amethyst Brook. For a great view I'll climb Mount Norwottuck.

L: When I want to get away from it all, I take a nice meditative stroll through one of Amherst's cemeteries. My favorite is the one off Triangle Street; the old graves are really beautiful and it's very peaceful. I always stop at Emily Dickinson's grave for inspiration. This leads me to Emily's house. You can visit and see where she actually lived and wrote. Otherwise, I find pockets of tranquility on the college campuses, such as Durfee Gardens at UMass, and the War Memorial at Amherst College.

E: Sounds relaxing, but I need a jolt, right now. What about a good cup of coffee?

L: For the good solid jolt, go to Starbucks. For a jolt without the edge, go to The Blue Moon Cafe, where you can sit and read while listening to music.

R: As a coffee connoisseur, I like Rao's, fresh roasted right in the store. For a quick cup I go to Bart's or the Black Sheep.

E: Thanks. You've given me a good overview, and there's still room left to explore, which is cool as this can be a starting point. I'll pick up the check.

R: Thanks. Hey — can I take your picture for my VMag column?

L: I thought you were fired.

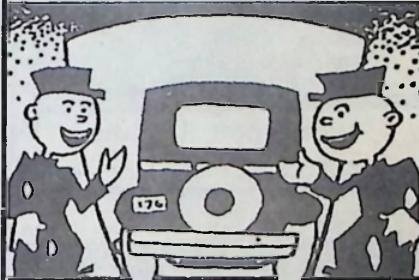
E: That's my cue to leave.

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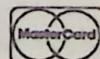
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# 42 COMICS

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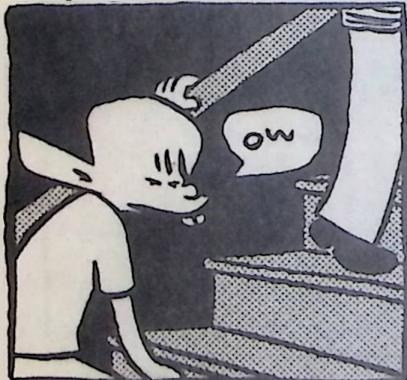
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**Leold** [www.leold.com](http://www.leold.com)  
by Roger and Salem Salloom © 1997

"To thine own self be true."

William Shakespeare

"I WILL ACT AS IF WHAT I DO MAKES A DIFFERENCE."

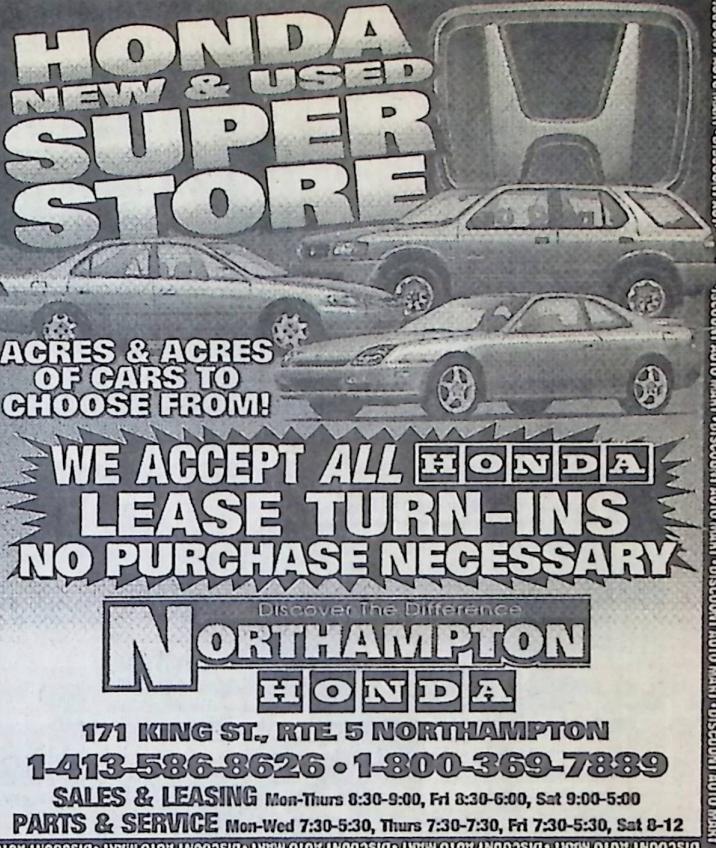
WILL JAMES

"There's no reason to get upset about this."

Leold

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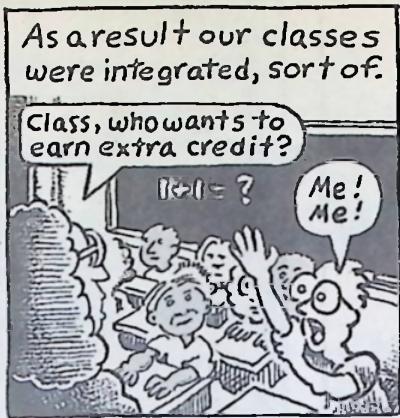
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I wish I could say that I was color-blind.



But I cast the blacks as "Incas."



I cast the whites as "Conquistadors."



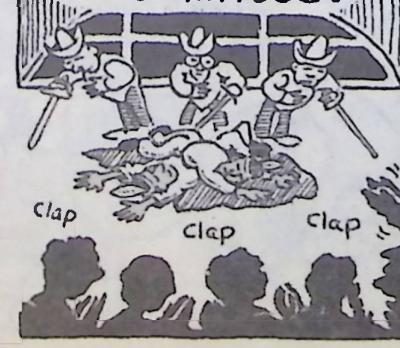
The premiere!



So the white kids killed all the black kids.



It had a certain grisly verisimilitude.



After school we returned to our separate neighborhoods.



**Call it what you will**  
 — java, jake, joe, a  
 cuppa, latte, cappuc-  
 cino — light and  
 sweet, black, with  
 cream, with milk,  
 iced, hot, anyway at  
 all and anywhere you  
 can find it, the first  
 thing is to find it.  
**And find it you will**  
 in VMag territory. To  
 assist you in your  
 search we've com-  
 piled a list of all (we  
 hope) the coffee hous-  
 es in the area.  
 [\* denotes coffee-  
 houses that roast  
 their own beans.]

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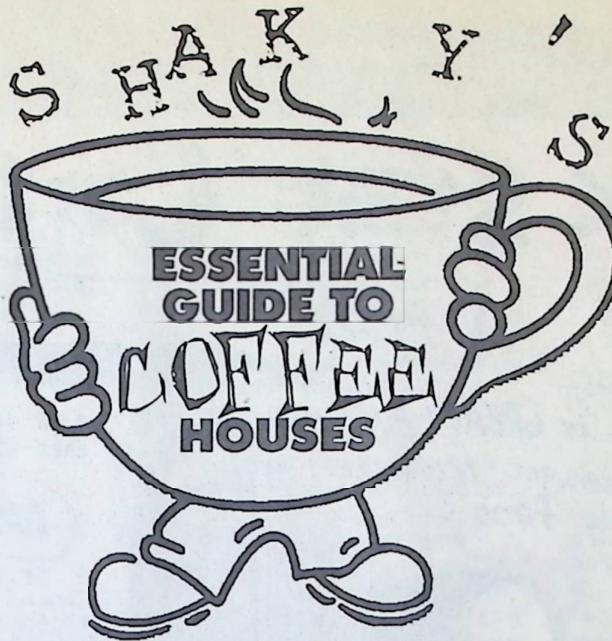
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Heroin, groupies, inky fingers, such is the life of a

# "Rock Star Cartoonist"



Being famous is **GREAT!!** But occasionally you get recognized by Undesirable fans ...



The best course of action during this situation is to lie.



Of course, sometimes different situations call for different measures.



What could I say? I can't let my true fans down. I wouldn't be who I am today without them.



### OOOPS

Dear Editor,

VMag is an interesting successor to *The Optimist* but how could you let author Russell Carlin misspell "his" as "hi's" and "its" as "it's"? "It's" doesn't mean "belonging to it;" it means "it is."

Yours for unmisleading English,

Ted Melnechuk  
Amherst

*Its a mystery to m'e.*

### ADVOCATE THIS

Murphy,

I got a call from an Advocate editor requesting that *Slow Wave* no longer run in VMag. Since they're paying me weekly to be in 6 papers, I'm afraid I'll have to choose to honor the request. Thank you very much for printing the comics you did (and the checks!).

Sorry to be such a flake. I'm sending two full-page dream-comics (not *Slow Waves*) as new submissions, but I'm sure you've got lots of other good stuff to fill my spot.

Best regards,  
Jesse Reklaw  
NonDairy Publishing

*That's all right, Jesse, I don't consider you a flake but I gotta admit to getting rather ticked off at your being put in such a situation, especially considering how you and I worked out a means by which identical *Slow Wave* strips would be prevented from running in both publications; they get new ones and we get old ones that haven't previously appeared in this area. Oh, well. I understand your position and respect your decision. I'll miss running the strips but am glad to have received the other full-page dream-comics, the first of which will run next issue.*

### SICK OF IT ALL

Dear Stuart Bloomfield,

Writing this letter may be,

completely reactionary (you know, bad review and all...). However, lately I've been quite unsettled when reading so-called music reviews of this nature. It seems that every college grad with some sort of journalism degree has taken it upon him/herself to turn their analysis of a record/concert into a podium for some type of social thesis or ego gratification piece. The discussion of Canadians' hair was not only a ridiculous delve into the latter, but was also summed up with your first sentence ("Not that this is very important..."). Maybe you were turned down by numerous publishing houses for that bitter, yet brilliant first novel you've been sweating over (in between grueling breaks at some rustic Sunderland coffee house, of course). I would certainly hope that you find more in music than something as shallow and bloodless as physical appearance. You are most definitely entitled to your opinion of our band, I just hope you don't believe that people will not see through the useless metaphoric drivel that seems to rear its 'first year student teaching' head at the start of every one of your "reviews."

We do have one thing in common though: I also believe that Hayden is one of today's finest songwriters (and a real nice guy too...). I just hope that you feel this way for the right reasons, and not because some indie-rock, elitist fanzine told you so.

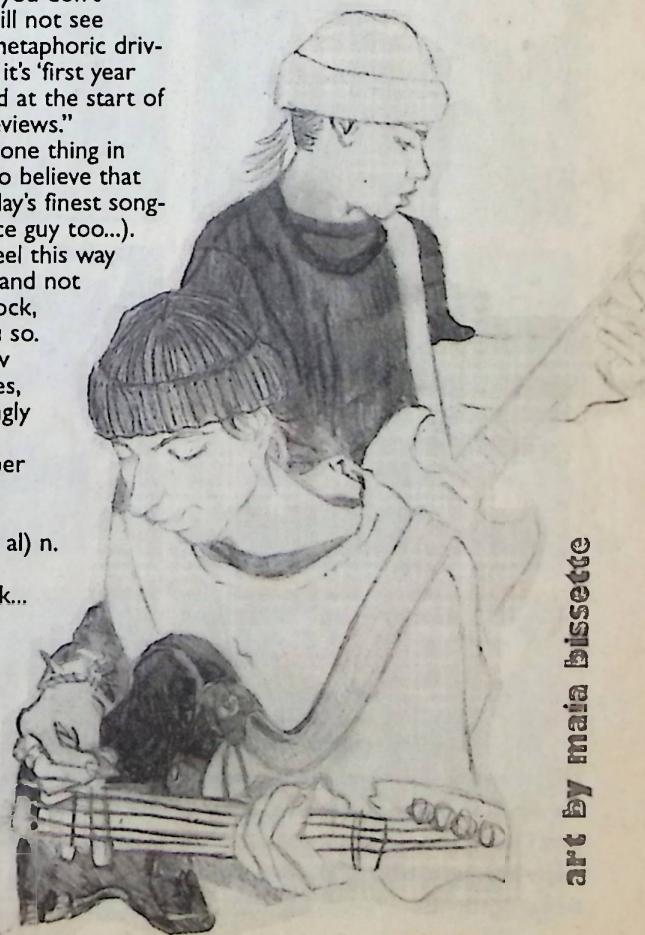
Love and new  
career choices,  
the perplexingly  
misnamed,  
Mark Schwaber  
HOSPITAL

PS - Hospital (hos' pit al) n.  
a medical institution  
for the care of the sick...  
as if "the Beatles"  
makes any  
sense, right?

*Stuart Bloomfield replies: Hey Mark. You disagree with my style. I appreciate your criticisms. As far as "the Beatles" moniker goes, I think it's kinda clever - 'Beat'les. In my opinion, your guys' name doesn't fit your sound (a hospital = cold, sterile).*

### OOOPS, PART 2

Correction to last issue's article "I Like Biking," by Daphne Hoey: A spokesperson for the Quabbin Reservoir informs us that biking is only allowed on paved roads, not gravel ones, and certainly not trails (and don't even think of bushwhacking). Paved roads include Gates 40, 43 and 44 on the east side of the reservoir, Gates 29, 30 and 35 to the north, and the eight miles of road in Quabbin Park. People caught biking on gravel roads and trails are being arrested with increasing frequency. (Hopefully they'll bag Daphne, too.)



art by maia bissette

**NEXT ISSUE: CRIME**  
**(POLICE & THIEVES)**  
available september 17

# "I just need a little SPACE!"

We've all been there: You get a great idea, need to remember a phone number, have to sketch something, draw a map, write down a lyric... and there's no paper anywhere. The next time this happens, help will be as close as a copy of VMag. Through issue 13, Larien Products (a great little Northampton company) will sponsor this "creativity page." Now, when you get hit with a brainstorm or just need to put something down on paper, grab the nearest writing implement and a copy of VMag and GO WILD!

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2

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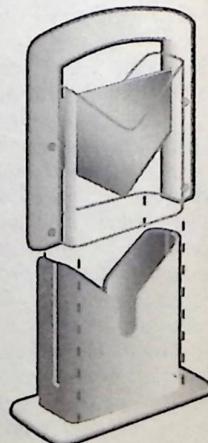
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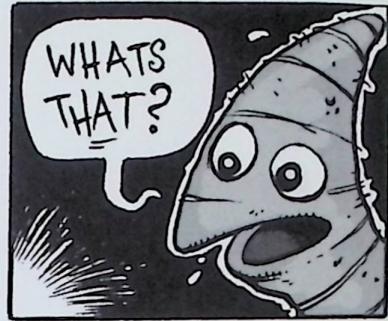
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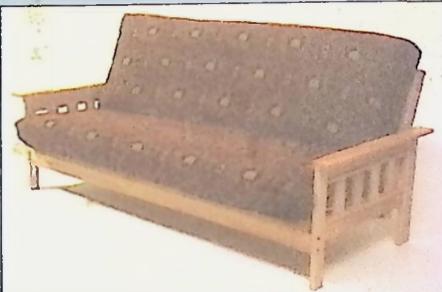
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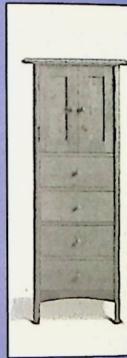
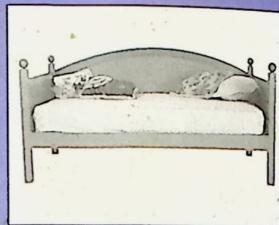


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